
兰斗纪
我吃西红柿

Desolate Era

(莽荒纪)

Book 4: Underwater Estate

Fate had never been kind to Ji Ning. Wracked by illnesses and infirm his entire life on Earth, Ning knew early on that he would die as a teenager. What he didn't know was that there really was such a thing as life after death, and that the universe was a far larger place than he thought. A lucky twist of fate (one of the few in Ning's life) meant that Ning was reborn into a world of Immortals and monsters, of Ki Refiners and powerful Fiendgods, a world where Dynasties lasted for millions of years. A world which is both greater…and yet also smaller…than he ever could imagine. He would have the opportunity to join them, and in this life, Ning swore to himself, he would never let himself be weak again! The Era he was born into was a Desolate one, but Ning would make it his era.

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Chapter 1 – His Waiting

Ji Ning slammed onto the ground, but he felt the area around him was so quiet. So terrifyingly quiet.

He couldn't hear anything at all.

At the same time, his entire body had lost all feeling. The powerful life force within his Fiendgod-like body immediately got to work, and his divine power quickly began to heal everything. The torn muscles and skin on his body, and even his torn intestines and organs began to rapidly heal. Ning's ears could now hear again, and he gained feeling in his body again.

"Pain. Such pain." Ning hurriedly looked into the distance. In that moment when he had completely lost all feeling and lost all hearing, he had been terrified.

"Truly too...too terrifying.' Ning stared at that distant, stooped, black-furred monster which emanated that thick, deathly aura. "That slap's speed was so fast I couldn't dodge at all. His strength in turn is far greater than the combined strength of those nine strange giants!"

The black-furred monster stood there quietly, his oily green eyes staring at Ning. He let out a hoarse sigh, which carried an endless resignation and disappointment. "I've waited for far too long, so long that I've forgotten time. All you need to do is pass the three trials without dying. You don't need to kill me. You just need to knock me down, to injure me. That's all."

With difficulty, Ning climbed to his feet, the ground stained with blood.

"Knock you down?" Ning stared at the stooped, black-furred creature.

"No. More precisely speaking, as long as you can injure me, can break my skin, can make me bleed." The black-furred creature said slowly, "I will immediately fall down. I've already calculated...the last

time, when Immortal Juhua was recruiting a disciple, there were ten people who had completed the trials and appeared before me. It was so rowdy. There was one of them, a youth, who relied on an extremely powerful Dao-seal to injure me. But I just took a step back instead of falling down…if I had fallen down, there would have been no need for me to endure these countless, lonely years. Loneliness truly is terrifying, very terrifying…"

Listening to this, Ning held his breath.

The black-furred creature in front of him had actually existed in the era of Immortal Juhua. He definitely wasn't training the Immortal ways, because there was no way for an ordinary Immortal to live this long. Only by becoming a Celestial Immortal would one truly have an unlimited lifespan, but there was no way a Celestial Immortal would be like the person in front of him. Most likely, a single breath from a Celestial Immortal would disintegrate Ning.

"Master only said that anyone able to injure and knock me down would be considered to have passed this trial." The black furred creature said slowly in that hoarse voice. "Come. Injure me. As long as you can injure me, I will immediately fall down."

"Injure you?" Ning's divine will once more picked up those two Darknorth swords. His severed fingers were reattached. This black-furred monster only watched silently, not interfering.

The black-furred monster looked at Ning, then said slowly, "Come at me full force. Everyone in the countless years who has come before me, I have given them this same chance. As long as a person can injure me, I will immediately fall down. Only…none of them were able to injure me. Not one!"

Ning's heart shook.

"Only that one time, when Immortal Juhua was recruiting a disciple, did that Dao-seal injure me. Why didn't I fall down? Just that one time. I missed that opportunity and never had another one." The

black-furred creature spoke very slowly. Tormented by countless years of loneliness, he no longer wished to live.

“Injure him?” Ning was frightened and shocked.

Based on what this creature which had most likely lived since the Fiendgod era was saying, only a single person had ever been able to injure him, and that was through using a Dao-seal!

“These people who made it here over the years most likely also included geniuses who had reached the level of comprehending the True Meaning of the Dao.” Ning felt an unbearable pressure. “What should I do?”

“Come.” The black-furred creature began to walk forward, his body hunchbacked. “Come. Wound me.”

Ning clenched his Darknorth swords.

Swoosh !

Ning suddenly charge into the air, two Dao-seals appearing in his hands. They were a Light Body Seal and a Divine Movement Seal… although he had found many Dao-seals in the storage magic treasures on the corpses, virtually all of them had lost their magic power over the passage of countless years and become useless. Only a hundred or so seals were left, amongst which the Divine Movement Seal and the Light Body Seal were the most common. The two Dao-seals immediately entered his body upon activation.

“Die.” Ning charged upwards, reaching the ceiling of the corridor, then kicked off with his two legs, utilizing the Windwing Evasion as he charged down from the top of the prefecture.

At this moment, Ning had reached the limits of his speed.

“Die!”

Ning’s entire strength was focused on the Darknorth sword in his

right hand, stabbing directly downwards.

The stooped frame of the black-furred creature came to a halt, raising its head and staring upwards with its oily green eyes at the downwards charging Ning. He just watched, watched quietly…his eyes didn't have a hint of life, seeming very slow and numb.

"Raindrop!"

"Pierces Rocks!"

Ning charged downward, the tip of his sword transforming into a drop of water. 'Drip'. It dripped onto the fur-covered face of that black-furred creature. At this moment, both his divine power as well as his Xiantian ki were being released at full power, and penetrative force from his high speed combined with the 'True Meaning of the Raindrop' had formed an extremely terrifying sword…

"*Chi* !"

The tip of the sword pierced onto the black-furred creature's face, who simply continued to look at Ning with an upraised face.

"You are still very far off." The black-furred creature sighed, his oily green eyes filled with boundless disappointment. "I need to keep waiting, keep waiting…as for you, I have no choice but to kill you."

Ning's sword had stabbed onto the black-furred creature's face, but hadn't left behind any injury. Unwilling to accept this, the Darknorth sword in his twin hands executed the 'Rain Line' and 'Moth Flies Into the Flame', two great killing strokes, stabbing at the creature's chest and face, but once again, he was unable to harm the creature at all.

"Retreat." Ning hurriedly retreated dozens of meters.

The black-furred creature's stooped form continued to make its way forward, slowly shuffling, but moving dozens of meters with each step. In terms of speed, he was actually even faster than Ning! Whether it was walking speed or attack speed, he was faster than

Ning. This was the first time Ning encountered someone faster than him in this corridor of trials.

Previously, he was able to rely on his Windwing Evasion to flee and buy time for himself, but this time, he was not able to do so.

“How can his skin be as tough as this?” Ning was incomparably frantic. Although the other Fiendgod Body Refiners of the Xiantian level who had previously fallen here served as proof that harming this black-furred creature was an incomparably difficult task, Ning still felt a sense of hopelessness after he himself truly used a full force attack and yet was unable to scratch the other’s face.

“Die. Stop struggling.” The hoarse voice rang out, and the stooped black-furred figure appeared out of nowhere by Ning’s side.

Ning’s body immediately became surrounded by three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals, swiveling slowly in opposite directions and generating a stirring force. But to this black-furred creature, the force generated by the Waterflame Lotus was like nothing more than walking within small rippling waves, unable to budge his body at all.

Ning’s two hands once more executed the ‘Raindrop Pierces Rocks’ attack, stabbing at the black-furred creatures legs and genitalia.

“I’m unable to flee, and defense is useless. I have to find a chance of survival. Killkillkill! Perhaps the other parts of his body have a weak point that I can stab.” Ning definitely wouldn’t just give up.

“Stop struggling.”

The black-furred creature sighed, and his fan-shaped giant palm once more slapped down towards Ning. He couldn’t be bothered to take about Ning’s swords, allowing them to stab on his body as he still slammed his palm down on Ning’s body.

“*Bang* !!!”

The armor-type magic treasure Ning was wearing instantly split apart, and the giant palm, filled with that dense deathly aura, went straight through Ning's chest, and then Ning himself was sent flying far, far away.

Bang.

Ning lay there on the floor, a huge hole in his chest. His body had nearly been torn in half. Ning lay there, completely unable to move. Such a huge hole suddenly appearing in his chest had caused his entire body to be paralyzed. He had to wait for the life force in his body to begin to regenerate it, but that needed time. He would most likely need half a minute before he would be able to recover his ability to move again.

But that distant, black-furred creature was already walking over again. Most likely, in just another second, he would be in front of Ning.

"Die." The stooped figure of that black-furred creature ambled forward.

"No!" Ning's heart was filled with incomparable ardor, ardor for life. He had died before, and had even gone to the Netherworld Kingdom and had seen Grandma Meng's Elixir. So he all the more desired life...he didn't want to go drink Grandma Meng's Elixir. "What should I do? How can I survive? I can't even move...right now, all I have left is my divine will. Can it be that I can rely on my divine will to wrap up the Darknorth swords to pierce into the black-furred creature."

Ning felt hopeless.

Ning knew very well the level of strength the divine will was capable of. When he had killed Ironwood Zhan, he had investigated. Divine will was capable of wrapping up trees, boulders, with a force that was roughly equivalent to a late-stage Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner! The power of will made physical was very powerful and very strong. But what good would it be right now?

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“I also have them.” Ning, seeing the black-furred creature draw closer, suddenly thought of something, letting out a heroic cry. “All out, now!”

Huahuahua ….

In the area around Ning, one magic treasure after another appeared out of nowhere in a dense cluster. Sabers, swords, spears… thousands of magic treasures hovered there. These magic treasures were all controlled by his divine will, and the blade tips, sword tips, and spear tips were all pointed towards that black-furred creature.

“All of my Xiantian Ki! Let’s go!” Ning had gone completely mad. The Xiantian ki in his dantian fully entered every single magic treasure.

These were all unranked magic treasures that had been left behind by deceased Xiantian lifeforms over the course of countless years. Ning had been able to easily bind them. All of these were usable by Xiantian experts, but generally speaking, Xiantian experts would wield them with their hands. Ning, because he had divine will, was able to use his divine will to wield the magic treasures.

It was as though thousands of hands had suddenly snatched up every single magic treasure, aiming them at the black-furred creature.

All of his Xiantian ki had entered every single magic treasure, causing Ning’s meridians to be torn. Generally speaking, a Xiantian lifeform could battle for a very long time, but Ning had used all of his Xiantian ki to be dispersed amongst thousands of magic treasures, causing the amount to drop.

“Kill!”

Ning’s badly damaged, completely immobile body lay there as he howled heroically with a savage look on his face.

His heroic howl was filled with incomparable ardor for life!

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish ! Countless sword flashes, saber flashes, spear flashes, and more all shot out, instantly turning the entire corridor into a wall of dazzling white color. All of them were aimed with incomparable accuracy, stabbing out at the same time at the body of the black-furred creature, who had already closed his eyes and spread his arms out.

"*Bang* ...."

Chapter 2 – The Fifth Master

Thousands of magic treasures shot out like rays of sword light, blade light, spear light, and more. They were like thousands of Xiantian Ki Refiners attacking in unison! But Ji Ning did this all by himself. If Ning hadn't reached the 'divine will' level of the soul, there would have been no way for him to control so many magic treasures so accurately.

If Ning hadn't gained such astonishing regenerative abilities at the Xiantian level as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, he wouldn't have been able to so wildly have all of his ki explode outwards; the only thing that would have happened was that his arteries and meridians would completely shatter, resulting in him becoming a cripple.

"*Swish* …."

The black-furred creature didn't block at all, nor did he dodge at all. He held his arms wide and closed his eyes. He was waiting…hoping…

The corridor was a cacophony of sound.

The black-furred creature was like a mountain collapsing. With a rumbling sound, he fell over!

"Did I wound him?" Ning stared with incomparable hope.

Right now, his body was ravaged, his meridians and arteries were ripped, and not a single drop of his Xiantian ki was remaining.

"I must have…I must have…" Ning stared hopefully. From afar, the fallen black-furred creature suddenly sat up, lowering his head to look at his chest. At his chest, his black fur had been torn apart, revealing faintly red flesh and deep green-colored blood. A thin line of blood oozed out from the wound, and then the wound rapidly healed, leaving behind only that line of deep green blood.

Ning's eyes instantly turned round, and he stared at the traces of

deep green blood on the chest of that black-furred creature.

Success!

He had succeeded!

He would live!

“Father. Mother. I’ve survived.” Ning’s Fiendgod-like body was quickly recovering. Although he was unable to move, Ning forgot his pain; rather, he felt wild joy at having overcome that tribulation.

“Wounded me. You wounded me.” From afar, the black-furred creature was first stunned, and then he raised his head, letting out a wild, heroic howl. “Aooooooooooooooooo!”

This heroic howl contained incomparable madness, sadness, and a sense of release.

Ning managed to sit up as well now, and he stared at the distant, howling black-furred creature….the loneliness and torment which could be heard in this great howl, which had been suppressed for trillions of years, caused even Ning’s heart to feel a sour bitterness.

After a long time, the sound ceased.

The black-furred creature stood up and look at Ning. In his hoarse voice, he said, “Thank you, my new master! Hurry up and bind this Immortal mansion. We will meet again.”

Hua !

Immediately afterwards, the black-furred creature disappeared into thin air.

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Ning quickly was able to stand up as well. The previous wounds to his meridians had been completely healed now, and he collected the thousands of magic treasures that lay scattered on the floor, storing

them into his storage treasure.

“I didn’t expect that in the end, I would rely on these unranked magic treasures to pass the third trial.” Ning let out a long sigh. A Fiendgod Body Refiner at the Xiantian level was able to use thousands of magic treasures in a single combined strike…he had never even heard of such a thing, so prior to this, he hadn’t even considered the possibility.

This was because this sort of action would only be possible for a freakishly talented person like Ning, who clearly was only a Xiantian level, and yet whose soul was already on the level of having ‘divine will’.

Ning had been visualizing the [Nuwa Painting] since he was an infant. The [Nuwa Painting] was one of the best visualization techniques even in the Celestial Realm or the Netherworld Kingdom, much less in the mortal realms… the likes of the Ji clan had never even heard of ‘visualization techniques’. In fact, Ning believed that even in the entire vast area controlled by the Grand Xia Dynasty, the best visualization techniques couldn’t necessarily compare to the [Nuwa Painting].

“Success.”

“I successfully passed this tribulation.” Ning stared at his surroundings. He saw the corpses and skeletons in the distance on the ground, and felt all the more emotional. “The dead became these skeletons. The survivor, according to what the black-furred creature said…I should be the new master.”

Ning was in no hurry to advance. Instead, he sat down in the lotus position and rested.

It took a full day for the Xiantian ki in his body to return to normal. Only then did Ning rise and continue to advance. When walking through the twisting corridors, Ning didn’t move very quickly. Instead, he carefully inspected this ancient Immortal estate.

After a long time…

“Um?” Ning saw that not far away, there was an exit, outside of which a pillar could faintly be seen.

“I’ve arrived?” Ning quickly walked out of the exit, and as he did, he had to suck in a cold breath. This was an incomparably vast palace, at least thousands of meters high. Compared to this vast palace, the nearby hundreds of meters tall corridors appeared to be extremely small.

In the front of the palace, there was an enormous praying mat, which was also three hundred meters in diameter.

And in the back of the palace…

There were also hundreds of enormous prayer mats scattered about as well.

“Such an enormous prayer mat?” Ning’s heart was filled with many questions. “Prayer mats are meant to be sat on, but this three hundred meter long prayer mat…what sort of a giant would sit atop this? And it seems that in addition to the giant who would sit at the top of the hall, there would also be hundreds of other giants sitting in front of him.

“The Immortal estate of Immortal Juhua?” Ning shook his head.

If the Immortal was a human, his body should be sized like a normal humans.

“This doesn’t make sense.” Ning hurriedly walked about, carefully inspecting this palace. The entire palace was very old and plain. Aside from those hundreds of prayer mats, there were no other decorations at all. One plain stone pillar after another supported the palace hall, and on each of the two sides of the palace hall were corridors, some three hundred meters tall, others three thousand meters tall.

There were three of the corridors that were three thousand meters tall, while only two of the corridors that were three hundred meters tall.

“I can’t go in?” Ning discovered that he wasn’t able to enter any of the corridors, including the one he had just come from. It was as though there was an invisible wall blocking them.

“The palace door!” Ning turned to look at the imposing palace door. Outside the palace door…there was an area completely enveloped in mist that one couldn’t see through at all.

Ning stood there, in this incomparably vast palace. He was as small as an ant. He then walked over to one of the prayer mats and sat down. He himself was only 1.7 meters in height, but he was seated on a three hundred meter long prayer mat. Ning felt that this was quite amusing.

“It really is comfortable.”

While sitting on the prayer mat, Ning could feel his mind growing more alert, and even his thoughts became much more rapid and nimble.

“How strange. I clearly have made it past the three trials and arrived at this palace hall. But right now, I’m not able to enter any of the corridors of the palace halls. I’m trapped here.” Ning said to himself. “The original master of this Aquatic Manor, having left behind those three trials, should have made some preparations for the successor who passed those trials, right?”

For example, the black-furred creature was teleported to him, then teleported away.

He himself had been teleported here as well…clearly, someone should be controlling this Aquatic Manor.

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Right at this moment, as Ning was sitting on the prayer mat and pondering, suddenly, from one of the three thousand meter tall corridors off to the side of the palace hall, an old black bull walked over.

As though sensing it, Ning turned his head to look. As he did, he saw an old black bull that was many meters in length slowly walk in. The old bull's eyes were filled with curiosity and liveliness as it carefully inspected Ning.

"Senior, might I ask who you are?" Ning immediately spoke out.

Most likely every single creature which appeared within this Aquatic Manor was extraordinary.

"Me?" The old black bull shook its head. "Don't call me 'Senior'. I'm nothing more than the spirit of a magic treasure."

"Spirit of a magic treasure?" Ning was astonished. "Magic treasures have spirits?"

He'd never heard of such a thing.

"I'm the magic treasure which Immortal Juhua always kept by his side." The old black bull sighed. "Child, don't think too much about it. Even if I brought my 'body' in front of you, given your power, there is no way you would be able to bind me."

Ning nodded. He understood this. As a Xiantian, he was only capable of binding some unranked magic treasures. Even ranked treasures had high and low level ones. The more powerful the magic treasure, the more difficult binding it was!

"Might I ask about the status of the master of this Immortal estate?" Ning hurriedly asked.

"Dead. All dead." The old black bull shook its head. "Dead for I don't even know how many years."

Ning nodded to himself. It was as he had thought.

“It has been too long, far too long. Over these slow, countless ages, I’ve teleported in quite a few Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiners, as well as Zifu Disciples.” The old black bull sighed. “Unfortunately, not a single one was able to succeed. At most, they would make it to the third trial, where they would all die. I didn’t expect that you, child, who clearly don’t have sufficiently dense divine power, would be able to succeed. This can be considered a miracle.”

“That third trial in particular.”

“Your soul has actually reached such a stage of power. However, the technique which you used is completely impractical.” The old black bull said disdainfully. “Thousands of magic treasures, aimed in a single direction. All the enemy has to do is dodge, and then you would have to immediately control thousands of magic treasures to change direction and aim at him again…it will be very hard for you to actually strike your enemy.”

Ning nodded. “True.”

“However, that golem was driven to nearly the point of insanity by the torment of countless years of loneliness, and so he actively welcomed the attack.” The old black bull said. “And so, you succeeded.”

“Golem?” Ning said in surprise. “It was a golem?”

He had seen golems before. When he had been training with a sword, his father had procured a training golem for him. But that black-furred creature just now…it had blood, had flesh, and was even capable of speech. How could it be a golem?

“Child, how much do you know? There are many different types of golems. That one just now was just a golem which had a soul inserted into it.” The old black bull said. “After implanting a soul into it, it gains intelligence and is even capable of displaying the ‘one with

the world' sage, or even more profound sword techniques, saber techniques, boxing techniques, etc. Naturally, its power would multiply manifold."

Ning now understood.

"As the soul trapped within the golem who is forever incapable of being reincarnated, it will be endlessly tormented." The old black bull said. "However, your own level of enlightenment is not low. That lotus flower you created earlier was based on the fact that your body has the Divine Solar Tattoo and the Divine Lunar Tattoo. For you to have these two great divine tattoos means that you most likely are training in the most powerful Fiendgod Body Refining technique of the Fiendgod era, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. Given your density of divine power, I expect you have only reached the fourth stage!"

Ning hurriedly said, "Senior, your judgment is wise."

"The [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] is a very powerful technique." The old black bull sighed. "You were able to break through to the Xiantian level, but you are only at the fourth stage. Most likely, you broke through just recently. You should be only ten or so years old as well."

"Eleven." Ning didn't try to hide it.

"An eleven year old Xiantian who trains in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. And at such a young age, you were able to reach the 'True Meaning of the Dao' in swordplay." The old black bull shook its head. "A genius like this is someone whom even the Grand Xia Dynasty would expend countless efforts in cultivating and training. There's no way they would be willing to let someone like you take tutelage under the auspices of Immortal Juhua."

Ning lifted an eyebrows.

"Actually, just by reaching the sixth stage, given the amount of divine

power you would have, and your understanding of the 'True Meaning of the Dao', you would have been able to succeed in the third trial. However, for you to succeed in the way you have is still quite impressive. Your soul is powerful, and your level of enlightenment is high. Your future accomplishments will be limitless." The old black bull sighed. "I still have to congratulate you. You have become the fifth master of this place."

Chapter 3 – To Make a Copy

“The fifth master?” Ji Ning was astonished. “Me?”

The old black bull had a hint of laughter in his eyes. He slowly ambled over, his body seeming vaguely illusory. He wasn’t a material creature, after all; just the spirit of a magic treasure.

“Of course it is you.” The old black bull said.

“That’s not what I meant. What I meant was…I’m only the fifth master?” Ning hurriedly asked. “Can it be that Immortal Juhua wasn’t the first one?”

He had previously discovered the letter on that Godbanian tree bark, and had hypothesized that after Immortal Juhua died, he shouldn’t have given this Immortal estate to anyone else.

“Immortal Juhua was the third master of this Immortal estate.” The old black bull said.

“Who was the fourth?” Ning asked.

The old black bull’s eyes held a hint of wistful memory in them. He slowly said, “In those days, Immortal Juhua’s fame was widespread. He was someone who stood at the very forefront of the entire Grand Xia Dynasty. A Loose Immortal capable of living for millions of years is an absolute miracle. The Three Disasters and Nine Tribulations which everyone who embarks on the Immortal path must endure… each tribulation is fiercer than the last. He had lived for simply too long, and the difficulty of the tribulations had reached an inconceivable level. Even Celestial Immortals probably wouldn’t be able to survive them. The longer he lived, the more the people in the Grand Xia Dynasty became aware of how formidable he was.”

“Immortal Juhua knew that his time was limited, and so he wanted to accept a disciple, and thus he spread the word…that he would only accept a Fiendgod Body Refiner who was at least a Xiantian lifeform

but no more than a Zifu Disciple. Of the major clans of the Grand Xia Dynasty, the ones who were in the know all sent their disciples to attempt the trials of that corridor.

“Two corridors. One for Xiantian lifeforms, one for Zifu Disciples.”

“One young person after another died. In the end, finally, a Zifu Disciple named ‘Rampart’ successfully passed the three trials of his corridor, and thus Rampart became the fourth master of this Immortal estate.

Ning nodded.

Immortal Juhua was the third.

Rampart was the fourth.

“Unfortunately.” The old black bull shook his head. “In the face of the endless tribulations, Immortal Juhua died. Not long after Immortal Juhua died…Rampart, who was merely at the ‘Wanxiang Adept’ level died as well. As for how he died and where he died, that’s unclear. Ever since Rampart died, this Immortal estate has not had an owner.”

Ning nodded, then said questioningly, “Rampart didn’t carry the Immortal estate with him?”

“Carry it with him?” The old black bull said in a low voice. “He was unable to even completely bind this Immortal estate. How could he have carried it with him?”

“He, a venerable Wanxiang Adept, was unable to bind it?” Ning asked.

The old black bull said, “Child, don’t underestimate this Immortal estate. This Immortal estate has an extraordinary background and history, and binding it is extremely hard. You should know that the more powerful a magic treasure is, the harder it is to bind it. This Immortal estate is actually a ‘dwelling’ type magic treasure…only by

becoming a Primal will one become just barely capable of binding it and carrying it."

"A Primal can only just barely bind it; he wouldn't be able to completely control this Immortal estate, which has some secret areas within that he still wouldn't be able to enter. Only by becoming an Earthly Immortal or a Loose Immortal will one truly be in control of this Immortal estate."

Ning understood. It made sense. If one was able to easily bind a magic treasure which was capable of teleporting people, that would be bizarre.

"Child, do you now understand how extraordinary this Immortal estate is?" The old black bull said complacently.

"Elder, you can address me as Ji Ning." Ning said.

"Child Ji Ning." The old black bull stepped onto one of the giant prayer mats on the ground. "Take a look at this prayer mat. The prayer mats are all hundreds of meters wide. Have you considered why?"

Ning pondered, then said, "Elder, when I first arrived within this palace hall, I was very puzzled as well. There is no need for an Immortal estate to have such enormous prayer mats. I actually wondered...if this Immortal estate was previously lived in by a race of giants or some other races."

"Although Immortal Juhua was only a Loose Immortal, he survived for millions of years before dying." The old black bull sighed. "He is the only Loose Immortal I know of who lived for so long! Why was Immortal Juhua so powerful, and why could he last for so long before dying? It was because of this...this Immortal estate!"

"This Immortal estate's age is beyond reckoning. According to the guesses of Immortal Juhua, this should have been the dwelling of an extremely powerful Fiendgod, which is why such enormous prayer

mats, beds, and corridors were built.” The old black bull said. “Immortal Juhua had, when he was young, made it past three trials before becoming the third master of this place.”

“Immortal Juhua had to pass three trials as well?” Ning was stunned.

The old black bull said, “The three trials….was the rule set down by the first master of this Immortal estate! That first master should have been an extremely powerful Fiendgod. Judging from the way the giant prayer mats in this hall are laid out, that Fiendgod should have been sat on the one up front, expounding on the Dao, while below many other Fiendgods would listen. Haha, these are all the affairs of the past. The Fiendgod Era ended long ago.”

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The old black bull and Ning chatted for quite a long while.

Ning finally couldn’t help but ask, “As the fifth master of this Immortal estate, what sort of benefits do I get?”

The old black bull blinked.

“Immortal Juhua was a Loose Immortal who had lived for millions of years. He should have left some things behind.” Ning asked.

The old black bull remained silent.

“You…”

“Alas!” The old black bull finally let out a sigh. “The third master and the fourth master both died, and they died too long ago. Immortal Juhua had originally given Rampart some treasures, but Rampart died outside. Countless years have passed, and you can’t possibly get anything from Rampart. Immortal Juhua did indeed leave some magic treasures within this Immortal estate, but you won’t be able to get them.”

“Why not?” Ning asked. “Aren’t I the master of this Immortal estate

now?"

The old black bull shook his head. "Imagine that you are the owner of a storage-type magic treasure, but you aren't able to bind it. Will you be able to take out the treasures within it? This Immortal estate is a dwelling-type magic treasure. If you don't bind it, there are many areas you cannot enter. Right now, you are only able to be here in the main palace hall. The other areas are off limits to you."

"I can only enter this main hall?" Ning was astonished.

"You should have discovered that you are only able to be in this main hall and that you are unable to enter the other areas of this Immortal estate." The old black bull said. "First become a Zifu Disciple; that will allow you to bind the control talisman. When you bind the control talisman, there will be many benefits to you. You will be able to enter many of the areas within the Immortal estate, and you'll also be able to voluntarily enter the Immortal estate from outside; for example, at Serpentwing Lake, you'll be able to enter the Immortal estate as you please."

Pa!

Out of nowhere, a dark gray talisman appeared, landing on the floor with a clattering sound atop a prayer mat.

"This is the control talisman." The old black bull said. "Only the master is permitted to have the control talisman. Hurry up and take it. Once you reach the Zifu Disciple level, you'll be able to bind it. After binding it, come back to the Immortal estate. Right now, you aren't able to enter any place at all, and you won't be able to get anything."

Ning collected this talisman.

The talisman was very rough. Atop it, there was a complicated, ancient-looking character; 'Left'! Just a single character. Although Ning had never learned the meaning of this character, upon seeing

it, he naturally understood what it meant.

“Control talisman?” Ning stored it into his storage-type magic treasure.

“Alright. You’ve taken the control talisman, and I’ve told you everything. You can leave now.” The old black bull said. “I’ll send you off now and teleport you back to that island in Serpentwing Lake.”

Ning hurriedly called out, “Stop!”

The old black bull looked towards Ning. “Is there something else?”

“Just like that…I’m supposed to leave?” Ning couldn’t help but say. “I just barely survived, and I’m supposed to leave with just a control talisman?”

The old black bull blinked twice. “Whose fault is it that the previous owner has already died? If he was alive, he could probably guide you or help you. But I’m just the spirit of a magic treasure…I don’t have any magic treasures or curios of my own. As for you yourself, you train in the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique which was even better than the technique which Immortal Juhua trained it. What can I give you? Oh! You probably don’t have any visualization techniques, right?”

“visualization techniques?” Ning was startled.

The Lord of Cui Palace had given him the [Nuwa Painting] visualization technique!

“visualization techniques are capable of refining the soul and strengthening it.” The old black bull said hurriedly. “This is something only the most powerful of clans have access to. I have a visualization technique in my memory. I’ll transmit it to you.”

“Transmit?” Ning was curious.

“Take out a quill and some ink.” The old black bull urged.

Flipping his hand, Ning took out a quill and some ink, as well as a large piece of beast skin, placing them to one side.

The old black bull looked at the quill, which began to hover in the air. “I am the spirit of a magic treasure who has trained for countless years, but my ‘divine will’ is most likely still weaker than yours. Still, grabbing a quill isn’t too difficult.” Controlling the quill, he began to draw a painting onto that glossy beast skin parchment. Soon, a picture of a Buddha that had a compassionate look on his face began to appear on the parchment.

This Buddha had the sun and the moon behind his back, and radiated boundless light.

Just by looking at it, Ning felt slightly affected.

“What do you think?” The old black bull casually controlled the quill and tossed it to one side, then said delightedly, “This is a painting of the true form of Buddha, and the Shining Sun Moon Buddha at that! This [Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha] is the visualization technique which Immortal Juhua had previously used. I always was by his side, looking at this painting of Buddha, and thus I naturally memorized it. Although my painting isn’t as good as the original, as long as you often look at this painting of Buddha…you will definitely strengthen your soul.

Ning was puzzled. “Inner visualization of Buddha?”

“To become a master of the Great Dao, aside from your body, you must understand the myriad mysteries of the Great Dao.” The old black bull said.

Ning only felt resigned. Compared with the [Nuwa Painting]…it wasn’t even comparable. His [Nuwa Painting] had been imprinted by the Lord of Cui Palace into his very soul and his memory. Naturally, he could sense it much more clearly. This old bull had simply drawn

out an image of Buddha based on his own memory.

“Can it be that you already have a visualization technique?” The old black bull noticed that Ning wasn’t very excited, and he couldn’t help but nod. “Makes sense. Your soul is so powerful. You should already have a visualization technique. Right…”

The old black bull pondered for a while.

Ning just waited.

This old bull was the spirit of an extremely powerful magic treasure who had followed Immortal Juhua for countless years. He should know many things.

“I remember now. Before this, you controlled thousands of magic treasures, right? I have a secret sword formation technique that is suitable for you to learn.” The old black bull suddenly said hurriedly. “In the past, I watched Immortal Juhua kill a powerful enemy who controlled a large number of flying swords in a formation to attack his enemies. His sword formation was thus recorded down by Immortal Juhua, who carefully looked through it. Although I only saw it once, I completely memorized it. I’ll make a copy for you.”

Ning hurriedly took out a large number of beastskin parchments.

The old black bull once again controlled the quill and began to write with it.

At the very top of the beastskin parchment were four words: [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!

Chapter 4 – Lesser Thousand Swords Formation

Ji Ning watched off to the side, not daring to disturb the old black bull as he wrote. On the skin parchment, one line of words after another swiftly appeared, along with the occasional formation diagram.

Soon, the pages of skin parchment were completely filled.

“All done.”

The old black bull tossed the quill aside, saying delightedly, “Child Ji Ning, you can be considered to be exceptionally talented. A Xiantian who actually has such an astonishing soul! Only with a sufficiently powerful soul is one suited for utilizing this ‘Lesser Thousand Swords Formation’. However, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] also requires flying sword type magic treasures, and it has exceptionally high requirements with regards to the amount of magic treasures.

“I have plenty of these unranked magic treasures.” Ning laughed.

The old black bull shook his head. “Once you reach the Zifu Disciple level, those unranked magic treasures will no longer be usable. At that time, what you will need is ranked magic treasures, and generally speaking, you will need a large number of flying sword type magic treasures in order to utilize this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] technique’s power.”

“A large number of ranked magic treasures?” Ning was stunned. “How many?”

“The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] at this highest level requires 729 flying swords.” The old black bull said. “Even if you are just using the weakest types of ranked magic treasures, you still need 729 of them…the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] requirements regarding magic treasures are very high. The more flying swords, the better. The more you have, the greater the power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] technique.”

Ning was stupefied.

Over seven hundred ranked magic treasures, and all sword type? He wasn't sure if the entire Five Prefectures of the Ji clan combined would be able to buy so many, even if they sold off all their assets.

"As your power increases, the number of flying swords you can use will naturally increase." The old black bull said. "Starting from Mortal-level magic treasures to Earth-level magic treasures, to Heaven-level magic treasures, to Immortal-level magic treasures…"

"I, I…" Ning felt an unbearable pressure. He hurriedly said, "It wouldn't have been hard for Immortal Juhua to procure and leave behind a few hundred flying swords here in this Immortal estate prior to his death, right? And Immortal Juhua killed that powerful enemy, who used the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] right?"

The old black bull shook his head. "That great enemy was known as the Thousand Swords Immortal! Immortal Juhua had to expend enormous amounts of effort in order to kill him. Although he had acquired those flying sword magic treasures after killing him, it was a waste to just keep them without using them. Thus, Immortal Juhua immediately traded them away for a large number of precious materials, which he then forged me out of! Thus, if you want to acquire thousands of flying swords from Immortal Juhua, it is impossible. Truly powerful Immortals will usually only carry a few magic treasures which they are particularly skilled in. After killing an enemy, they will immediately use the enemy's tools to upgrade their own magic treasures! They won't just leave them there to be wasted."

"Understood." Ning was somewhat despondent.

"Don't think too much of it. Don't think that just because you received this Immortal estate that you'll instantly fly to the heavens." The old black bull said. "There are countless relic sites left from the Fiendgod Era, but how many people are able to truly stand at the very top of the Grand Xia Dynasty? The fourth master, Rampart, only reached the Wanxiang Adept level before dying. Don't end up like him."

The old black bull continued, “My creation was thanks to this Thousand Swords Immortal. Thus, I paid especial attention to this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. I didn’t just read it once; I also carefully pondered it. I’ll explain to you.”

Ning immediately began to listen attentively.

“The [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] uses nine flying sword type magic treasures to form the base of a formation! You need nine formation bases…in order to form a sword formation. This is the most basic sword formation, which requires eighty one flying sword type magic treasures . This is the first level [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] attack.”

“If you are able to control a second set of eighty one flying swords and have these two sword formations cooperate…your power will instantly multiple! This is the second level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! You will need 162 flying swords!”

“If you are able to control 243 flying swords to have three sword formations join forces, your power will multiple once more. This is the third level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!”

“Four sword formations will again multiply the power, and is known as the fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].”

“And so on and so forth.”

“In the end, with nine sword formations combined, you will need exactly 729 flying swords, which will be the ninth level of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. The power is so great…as to be inconceivable! But of course, given your current soul strength, even if you are able to control many unranked flying swords, you are far from being able to reach this level for now.”

Ning nodded as though understanding.

“For example, if you were to become a Wanxiang Adept, you would be able to use unranked magic treasures to set up nine sword

formations! But if you were to use ranked magic treasures, most likely you wouldn't even be able to set up two or three sword formations." The old black bull said, "The more powerful a magic treasure is, the more mental energy you use up in controlling them. Naturally, it won't be easy to control them. But this also means that even after becoming a Celestial Immortal, you can still use this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. However, by then, perhaps you would have acquired an even better sword formation. But of course, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]...should be good enough for you to use for a thousand years."

"The most important secret of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] lies in the 'Lesser Thousand Seal Lines'..."

The old black bull continued to explain some of the mysteries.

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A while later, Ning had finished reading the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] for the first time. He couldn't help but sigh in astonishment. Compared to the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], that 'Yin-Yang Twin Energy Formation' which Ironwood Zhan had used was absolute trash.

Ning immediately and quickly withdrew nine sword-shaped magic treasures from his storage treasure. Because these were all unranked magic treasures, generally speaking they were meant to be held in the hand when engaging in battle; there were thus some differences between them and flying swords.

"Lesser Thousand Seal Lines." Ning tested drawing the lines out on the floor with his finger.

Given Ning's control of his body, he was naturally able to completely duplicate the seal lines.

The old black bull, by his side, shook his head. "No. It isn't the appearance that needs to be the same; the inner meaning needs to

be the same. When you draw the 'Lesser Thousand Seal Lines', you need to faintly activate the power of the heavens and the earth. Only then will the seal lines be complete."

"Alright." Ning continued to draw.

Because his copying ability was quite accurate, and given that Ning had already reached the 'True Meaning of the Dao' level, and also had a faint hint of understanding regarding the 'Dao'...after drawing it 312 times, he drew a seal line which was capable of utilizing a hint of the power of the world.

"Right." The old black bull nodded. "Your level of comprehension is very high, your soul is powerful, and you are very sensitive towards the heavens and the earth. It is only normal that you learn quickly... remember, the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines is the base for the entire [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. You must not reveal it. Once the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines are revealed, some of the larger tribes will definitely be able to develop this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] just based on the seal lines."

Ning nodded. "I understand."

"Then you can begin." The old black bull watched from one side.

Ning let himself calm down, and then he withdrew a small basin from within his storage treasure. He placed his finger within the small basin, and from within his fingernail, one drop of blood after another began to well up and flow out. Soon, he had a small basin that was half-full of blood. Watching to the side, the old black bull shook his head and sighed emotionally, "Fiendgod Body Refiners have extremely powerful life force. They can be chopped into many pieces without dying, while Ki Refiners will die to a blow to the heart. If a Ki Refiner was to lose this much blood, their face would turn pale. For you, though, most likely your body replenished the blood as soon as you let it out."

Ning didn't say anything. Instead, he picked up a sword-type magic

treasure, which suddenly shrank in size greatly. Ning's finger, stained with blood, began to draw atop the sword.

In the blink of an eye, a single Lesser Thousand Seal Line appeared on the sword. A bloody light flashed, and quickly, the seal line completely merged into the sword.

"Success." The old black bull nodded.

Ning then picked up yet another sword-type treasure. Once he had mastered the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines, he virtually never made a mistake. During this attempt at the trials, he had acquired thousands of magic treasures, with swords being extremely common. He had a full thousand sword-type magic treasures. Ning straightforwardly drew onto 729 of the sword-type magic treasures.

"Formation base!" Ning sat there in the lotus position, and imposed his will.

Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua! Shua!

Immediately, nine swords swung into the air around Ning, slowly revolving. But there was something missing. Ning frowned.

"Remember. The power of the sword formation comes from attuning to the heavens and the earth." The old black bull said to one side.

After the amount of time it took to brew tea.

The nine swords hovering around Ning were faintly carrying within them a type of invisible intent. It was as though the nine swords actually formed a single entity. In that moment, the nine swords were positioned in a very perfect manner with respect to each other.

"The formation base is complete. Formation, arise!" Ning willed it, and then 72 more swords suddenly lifted up, all of them in groups of nine.

The first level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] required

81 swords to be formed into a formation.

“Huahuahua…”

81 sword-type magic treasures circled and hovered around Ning, while Ning himself closed his eyes as he controlled them. Soon, with the Lesser Thousand Seal Lines in each sword as the base, the 81 sword-type magic treasures began to emit a hazy glow while countless sword glows quickly converged around Ning.

A constantly fluctuating sword light hovered there in the air next to Ning.

Ning finally opened his eyes and stared at the hovering sword light next to him. This sword light was the Xiantian ki of his which had been transformed and compressed by the magic formation of the 81 sword-type magic treasures. The amount of power had already caused a qualitative change, and the strength was astonishing.

“Not too bad.” Ning willed it. Another 81 swords rose into the air.

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The old black bull stood there, watching. He couldn’t help but sigh in amazement at the strength of Ning’s soul. This wasn’t as simple as what he had done earlier, just stupidly and wildly controlling thousands of magic treasures to go forward in one direction. He had to carefully control every single flying sword…causing them to form a perfect, complete sword formation which was continuously able to summon the power of the heavens and the earth.

“He mastered the third level as well. In terms of strength alone, the power of his sword light right now isn’t any longer than his earlier attack of thousands of magic treasures.” The old black bull sighed in astonishment. The power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] multiplied several times over with each increase in level.

Hundreds of sword-type magic treasures swiveled around Ning, with the surface of each sword having a hint of light on it. In front of Ning,

the solidified, devouring sword light grew even more powerful.

Yet another 81 swords entered the mix, with the level of difficulty in controlling them quickly increased as well.

Ning's forehead began to be covered in sweat.

Rumble…

All of the swords were hovering with a faint light.

"Success." The old black bull was stunned, incomparably stunned. "He is actually able to utilize the fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!"

Papapapapapa …405 swords clattered and fell to the floor. His forehead covered in sweat, Ning opened his eyes and murmured to himself, "The fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is too arduous. My head hurts terribly. Normally, in battle, I should limit myself to the fourth level. Using the fourth level is much easier."

Chapter 5 – Ancient Rites

The old black bull looked at Ji Ning, head covered in sweat, and said in praise, “Formidable, formidable. Child Ji Ning, at such a young age, you are already able to utilize the fifth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Compared to you, that Rampart is nothing worth mentioning at all! I didn’t expect that after the Immortal estate has waited for so many years, an unpolished jade like you would appear!”

Ning murmured to himself, ‘unpolished jade’? He himself had the experiences of his previous life, the [Nuwa Painting], and had been training hard since he was young. All these factors combined were what led to the old black bull praising him as being a piece of ‘unpolished jade’.

“Senior, right now, I find it difficult to utilize the fifth level.” Ning repeatedly shook his head. “I’m only able to use the fourth level freely.”

“Using it freely is more important.” The old black bull sighed. “Have you discovered that although the fourth level of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] only allows you to control three hundred or so flying swords, in terms of power, it is already greater than when you wildly controlled thousands of magic treasures!”

Ning revealed a hint of amazement. “Even more powerful than the combined attack of thousands of swords from earlier? Although I was able to feel that the sword light I created was done so in a free manner and that it held great power, I didn’t know exactly how much power it had.”

The old black bull said, “The fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] will allow you to kill most peak Xiantian lifeforms as easily as you wish.”

Ning was delighted upon hearing this.

“Senior.” Ning hurriedly asked, “Dare I ask, how is my current power? How does it compare to a Zifu Disciple?”

“Right now, you have two primary types of battle tactics. The first relies on your Fiendgod body and your close-combat sword techniques.” The old black bull said. “Your swordplay already carries within it a hint of the True Meaning of the Dao. Most Xiantian lifeforms aren’t at such a high level of comprehension; most peak Xiantian lifeforms are at the ‘one with the world’ stage. Just based on this alone, you are at an advantage compared to most peak Xiantian lifeforms! But of course, I’m just talking about ‘ordinary’ Xiantian lifeforms. If your enemy is as much of a freak as you are, whose swordplay is not inferior to you, then it would be hard to say who would win.”

Ning nodded.

He understood. For example, his father, Ji Yichuan. His swordplay was most likely still inferior to that of his father; after all, Father had long ago reached the peak Xiantian level. Ning naturally wouldn’t be a match for his father.

“If you relied on your [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]…” The old black bull continued, “Given your powerful Fiendgod body, if you use hundreds of flying swords to form into a [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], the power will indeed be very formidable. In terms of strength, it will be far beyond that of peak Xiantian lifeforms. It should have reached the power level of most early Zifu Disciples.”

“Just early Zifu?” Ning felt that his improvement should be larger than this.

The old black bull shook his head. “Don’t underestimate Zifu Disciples. Once Zifu Disciples internally establish their Zifu, the ‘Violet Palace’, their bodies will begin to generate elemental power! Even simple attacks such as punches and kicks will be far greater than that of the Xiantian level. These are two fundamentally different levels! In addition, more importantly, Zifu Disciples are

capable of using ranked magic treasures."

"Ranked magic treasures are extremely powerful. Zifu Disciples, when using them, are far more powerful than you Xiantians can imagine. The difference between a peak Xiantian and a Zifu Disciple is like that of an infant and an adult." The old black bull sighed in praise.

Ning understood.

Right. From the Xiantian level to the Zifu level was a fundamental change. It allowed one to be able to use ranked magic treasures. It was much like how a Xiantian lifeform could kill a peak Houtian expert as easily as chopping vegetables. Zifu Disciples could kill Xiantian lifeforms just as easily.

"Remember." The old black bull shook his head. "No matter what, do not underestimate Zifu Disciples. Every single Zifu Disciple has bizarre, strange abilities. Some are skilled at formations, others are skilled at venomous pests, still others at controlling souls or creating golems, or even sorcery...there's no way to describe them in 'general'. If you run into someone who is a bad matchup for you, you will definitely die."

"The weak can overcome the strong."

"If a bad matchup happens, an early Zifu expert can slay a late Zifu expert." The old black bull sighed. "The path of Immortality includes everything in existence. There are too many techniques...a Zifu Disciple might be weak, but if he had raised millions of terrifying venomous insects, even a Wanxiang Adept might be devoured alive!"

Ning swallowed a cold breath of air.

"But it's rare." The old black bull said hurriedly. "It's quite rare for someone of a lower rank to kill someone of a higher rank. For example, someone like you who has such an incredibly powerful soul as well as hundreds of flying swords, and the [Lesser Thousand

Swords Formation]…many factors combined to give you this sort of combat potential. I'm just warning you not to underestimate any opponent. Even Xiantian lifeforms."

Ning nodded gently. "Understood."

Upon reaching the Zifu Disciple level in particular, no one was easy to deal with.

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In his heart, Ning was still quite joyful. On this trip to the underground estate, he had acquired a killing attack; the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]!

"Child Ji Ning." The old black bull continued, "Before this, when I watched you attempt the trials, I discovered that the power of your swords is fairly average. Can it be that you aren't aware of the 'Fiendgod Bloodforging' technique?

"Fiendgod Bloodforging technique?" Ning blinked. "What's that?"

The old black bull couldn't help but say, "In the Fiendgod Era, virtually all people with a bit of power or clans of a decent size would know about this. This is because every single Fiendgod knew it, and this was something which every single Fiendgod had to learn. I saw that you are clearly a Fiendgod Body Refiner, but you it seemed as though you didn't know the Bloodforging technique. Naturally, that made me curious."

"Senior, please instruct me." Ning asked hurriedly.

Having an old person at home was like having a treasure.

This sort of old man who had lived since the Fiendgod era knew so many things.

"Fiendgods are not the same as we humans." The old black bull said. "They don't train in Ki, and are unable to use magic treasures.

However, they need weapons as well. As their strength increased in power, however, how could they find a suitable weapon for them? Thus...the great powers amongst the Fiendgods developed the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique!"

"First, find a weapon, and then utilize the complicated Rites of Bloodforging! After the bloodforging is completed the weapon will be able to absorb various auras, such as a baleful aura, an evil aura, a killing aura, and other auras. The more enemies you kill, the more powerful the enemies you kill, the more the weapon will naturally strengthen. It can change in size and weight as you please."

"This sort of weapon is often referred to as a 'divine weapon', a 'demonic weapon', or a 'slaying weapon'." The old black bull said. "As the strength of the master increases, and as the master kills more and more powerful opponents, the strength of the weapon will increase as well, to the point where in the Fiendgod era, some divine weapons and demonic weapons were even more powerful than Immortal-level magic treasures."

Ning's eyes were shining.

Right. The heavens were always fair. The Fiendgods were completely unable to use magic weapons, but thus they had some techniques to make weapons for themselves. So it was through absorbing baleful auras and other auras; causing their divine weapons to increase in power through slaughter.

"Senior, please teach me." Ning said hurriedly.

"Since I've mentioned this to you, of course I will teach you." The old black bull said. "The Rites of Bloodforging are very complicated. Listen carefully."

The old black bull stood there, expounding on the process of the Rites of Bloodforging, while at the same time drawing down some diagrams on occasion. Ning just listened and memorized.

Why was it known as the Rites of Bloodforging?

The primary required ingredient was the blood of Fiendgods. For a human Fiendgod Body Refiner, only the blood of one who had naturally developed divine tattoos while reaching the Xiantian level would suffice, as only then would they have been reborn into the body of a Fiendgod. Only such a person would be able to use the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique. Some of the lower-class Fiendgod Body Refiners were unable to use this bloodforging technique.

“Huahuahua…” Ning took out a gourd. This gourd was originally used to store wine. It didn’t look large, but it was able to contain ten thousand kilograms of wine. Ning poured out all of the remaining wine in the gourd, not leaving a single drop behind, and then placed his finger into the gourd.

Blood dripped out from his finger, flowing into the gourd.

A long time later.

“A thousand kilograms of blood is enough.” The old black bull said to the side. “This bloodforging technique is only usable by Fiendgods. Normal Ki Refiners who lose this much blood will definitely die.”

Ning sat there in the lotus position. Immediately after having released the blood, the powerful life force in his body naturally began to regenerate his blood. The only thing which was used up was divine power. When the divine power in Ning’s body was reduced to just half, roughly a thousand kilograms of blood had entered the gourd.

“There are seven steps to the rites. You must be sincere.” The old black bull warned.

Ning respectfully knelt down and kowtowed three times, and then stood up before kneeling down and kowtowing three more times. He did this eight times, in all eight directions!

“Hua…” Ning suddenly overturned the gourd in his hand. From

within the gourd flowed out a large amount of fresh blood. As soon as it flowed out, it was wrapped up by Ning's divine will and quickly scattered in an area of roughly two hundred and fifty meters around him. The countless droplets of blood formed into a massive diagram, a diagram of a head with disheveled hair.

The diagram completed.

Boom! Instantly, a bloody aura that was visible to the naked eye began to shine.

"The descendant kneels in supplication to the Ancestor God." Ning called out in a loud voice.

The first step of the bloodforging rites – Begging the Ancestor God!

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The complicated Rites of Bloodforging continued for nearly half a day. The bloody light in the area had already formed into a bizarre character. According to what the old black bull had said...this sort of character was known as Fiendgod characters! It was a type of writing which the heavens had naturally given birth to. Although he had never learned it before, the first time he had seen the characters, he understood it.

The meaning of this Fiendgod character was...'KILL'!

"Huahuahua..." Three Darknorth swords appeared in mid-air. As soon as they appeared, they began to hover there. The weapons which Ning was planning to use the Rites of Bloodforging on were these Darknorth swords! Because, according to what the old black bull had said, although the Fiendgod Bloodforging technique didn't have very high standards necessary towards weapons, the better the base material was, the better the results would be. Those unranked magic treasures were simply too inferior.

Based on the judgment of that old black bull, the Darknorth swords should have previously been Heaven-level magic treasures. Although

the runes atop them had been destroyed, the only thing that matter for bloodforging was the physical material components. As for the runes, those were meaningless.

“Hua!” “Hua!” “Hua!”

The ‘Kill’ character formed by the nearby blood began to shoot shadows out from itself, entering the three swords. That enormous ‘Kill’ character hovering in mid-air began to dim, and then disappeared. The entire hall once more returned to its usual calm.

Ning let out a long breath.

“Senior.” Ning couldn’t help but say. “Just then, I sensed an awesome presence that seemed even higher than that of the ‘Dao’…” He had meditated on the Dao before, and had gained a hint of an insight into the aura of the Dao. However, just now, when undergoing the Rites of Bloodforging, that ancient, natural aura that had emanated forth made him feel as though he had touched a powerful, mighty existence which was even more ancient than the Dao.

The old black bull sighed. “I didn’t dare to say a word during the Rites of Bloodforging. I was completely stunned. Take a look and see how your weapon seems.”

With a wave of his hand, the three Darknorth swords landed in Ning’s grasp. Picking one up with his divine will, he sliced it against his arm. Chi! The skin on his arm, seemingly as tough as leather, began to emit sparks, then finally cracked apart into a wound.

“Much sharper.” Ning was shocked.

“Your Darknorth swords were made from good materials.” The old black bull said. “Right now, your close combat abilities have increased dramatically. Most peak Xiantian experts won’t be a match for you. In close combat, you are only one or two levels lower in power than when using the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. However, you must understand that you are training in the number

one Fiendgod Body Refining technique. Your close combat strength will increase at a monstrous rate. For example, when you train to the sixth stage, your close combat power should completely eclipise the power of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! Once you then learn a close-combat type 'divine ability', it will become effortless for you to do battle against those at a higher level."

Ning's eyes lit up. "Elder, do you know any divine abilities?"

"Divine abilities? Those are the secrets of the great powers amongst Fiendgods, which are not taught to outsiders." The old black bull shook his head. "Immortal Juhua only knew a single divine ability; the 'Heavenly Transformation' technique. Unfortunately, I never asked him about it. Alright...given your potential, in the future, you will definitely have the chance to learn a 'divine ability'. Once you do, it will be normal for you to fight those at a higher level. That is the power of a true Fiendgod!"

Ning nodded.

He understood. As an Fiendgod Body Refiner, he had a good foundation. In a few years, he would reach the sixth stage. His [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] would also strengthen alongside his soul, and he was very talented. The only problem was that the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] had very high requirements with regards to magic treasures. When he became a Zifu Disciple, he would have to get hundreds of ranked magic treasures...his head hurt just thinking about it.

"Enough. You can go back now." The old black bull said.

"Thank you so much, Senior." Ning naturally had packed away the scrolls of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] and the [Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha]. Although he himself didn't need the visualization technique for himself, he could still leave it for his parents or the Ji clan.

"You can go." The old black bull said.

Hua!

Ning only felt an enormous illusory grizzly head appear, swallowing him within its maw. Spacetime around him once more distorted. He understood that he was about to return to Serpentwing Lake.

Chapter 6 – Ji Ning – Entering Lake, Battling Serpentwing

Ji Ning only felt spacetime changing, and then everything calmed down.

“Huh?” Ning looked at the dark tunnel in the lair. This was the place he had been teleported from. He couldn’t help but laugh.

This event truly had been something he had barely survived.

However, in the end, he had lived, and his power was much greater than before as well.

“Next time I go in, I’ll need to have first bound this control talisman.” Ning stretched out his hand, and a roughly made talisman appeared within it, with the Fiendgod character for ‘Right’ embedded on it. Ning had tested binding it, but unfortunately, his Xiantian ki was completely unable to enter it. It seemed as though he absolutely had to wait to become a Zifu Disciple.

“Right?” Ning murmured. “Why is there a ‘Right’ character on this talisman? I wonder what sort of history it has.”

And then, Ning pushed it to the back of his mind as he stored the talisman again. With a leap, he moved out from the corridor as agilely and as quickly as a gust of wind.

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Serpentwing Lake, within a crude room. Ji Yichuan and his wife were living here.

Yuchi Snow was currently quietly seated at the side of the lake. In her hand, she held a cup of boiling hot water, which she was slowly drinking.

“Snow, Snow.” Suddenly, a cry of excitement rang out from within the room. Yuchi Snow immediately turned her head to look. The

normally glacier-like Yichuan now had his face covered with excitement and joy as he rushed out. On his chest, some drops of water could be seen, with the faint scent of wine.

Yuchi Snow, seeing the way her man was acting, had a sense that she knew what had happened. “What is it?”

“I can sense it.” Yichuan said hurriedly. “I can sense the jade sword. It is completely unharmed! Previously, Ning definitely must have suddenly entered a secret, hidden area, a small dimension or a small world, or perhaps an ancient formation. He has already come out of that hidden area alive.”

Encountering a relic site was a matter of luck, but it also represented an enormous risk! Ning hadn’t left for over a month, and so the two of them had been growing increasingly concerned and increasingly panicked.

Yuchi Snow closed her eyes. Two flows of tears came out, and she murmured to herself, “Thank the heavens and thank the earth. Thank the heavens and thank the earth.”

“He is currently in the center of Serpentwing Lake, most likely on that island.” Yichuan said hurriedly.

“Let’s go see him.” Snow stood up.

“Right.” It had been a long time since Yichuan had lost his composure like this. Even when he had learned that his son had broken through to the Xiantian level, he hadn’t been this excited. Immediately, he took his wife by the hand and began running across the surface of the lake as though it were solid land, transforming into a streak of blue mist as he hurried afar.

The Azure Firebird couldn’t always be here waiting. After all, that was the spirit-beast of Ji Redflower! In recent days, Yichuan and Snow had been living here, while the Azure Firebird had gone home.

Suddenly…

“Diremonster Serpentwing, I, Ji Ning, have come again! You still won’t come out?!” A loud roar spread in every direction, including into the ears of Yichuan and his wife, still walking across the surface of the lake.

“Ning, he…” Yuchi Snow couldn’t help but reveal a hint of a laugh on her face. “As soon as he leaves that hidden relic site, he immediately once again challenges that Serpentwing.”

Yichuan nodded. “Ji Ning relied on the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] to become a Xiantian, and so he wasn’t that far off from Serpentwing to begin with in power. This time, within that hidden relic site, perhaps he had some certain gains…and now that I can sense his location, there’s no need for any concern.”

“Right.” Snow nodded as well.

The two continued to move forward.

Soon…

“Look!” Yichuan saw from afar, in the distance, the waves of the lake were parted as a youngster was walking directly towards the bottom of the lake. “That kid has actually parted the waters and is heading directly towards the bottom of the lake.”

“He’s going to the bottom of the lake?” Snow was shocked.

Yichuan shook his head. “Don’t be worried. You watched Ning as he grew up. Can it be that you don’t know his temperament? If he wasn’t confident, would he go down?”

“Right.” Snow nodded.

“Let’s go over, but we’ll stay on the surface of the lake.” Yichuan said. “We’ll monitor the situation down below at all times. As soon as anything goes wrong, I will immediately go down.”

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“Diremonster Serpentwing, I, Ji Ning, have come again! You still won’t come out?!” After calling out while at the surface of the lake, Ning waited for a long time but Serpentwing still did not come out. Ning immediately made the decision to use his power to control fire and water to take command over the water around him in Serpentwing Lake.

Huahuahua….

The waters of the lake were parted by an invisible hand, and were parted, revealing a corridor into the water.

Ning walked directly towards the bottom of the lake. The deeper he went, the more powerful the water pressure became. Ning directly controlled a cylindrical underwater ‘corridor’ roughly ten meters across as he walked down through the corridor.

“That’s the one named Ji Ning.”

“It’s him.”

The aquatic lesser monsters within the lake stared from afar as a human walked down through a corridor. All of them once more went to make the report.

Serpentwing’s nest.

The Diremonster, Serpentwing, had already transformed into human form, and was seated on a chair. He was forcibly suppressing his rage. “This Ji Ning came over a month ago to challenge me, and now he is challenging me again! The lake is so enormous. If some Xiantian lifeforms are hidden nearby, who would know? I know you have a trap. How could I let myself fall for it?”

“Great king, great king.”

“Great king.”

Three lesser aquatic monsters came charging over.

“What is it?” Serpentwing growled.

Of the three lesser aquatic monsters, the leader, a prawn monster, hurriedly reported, “Great king, that Ji Ning suddenly parted the waters and has begun entering the depths of the lake.”

“Entering the lake?” Serpentwing suddenly stood up, then immediately said, “When he parted the waters, what method did he use?”

“We didn’t see him use any Xiantian Ki, nor did we see anything special. The waters simply naturally parted.” That prawn monster said hurriedly.

Serpentwing said in astonishment, “No wonder this Ji Ning dared to challenge me in such a way. So he was capable of controlling water as soon as his Fiendgod Body Refining technique reached the Xiantian level. I wonder which type of technique he trains it. Who cares. When I went to the Western Prefecture City, he was only at Houtian level. Now that he has reached the Xiantian level, he is still only at most an early Xiantian!”

“He actually dares to enter the lake!” The long, narrow eyes of Serpentwing were flashing with a ferocious light. “Hell has no doors, but you insist on barging in. I, Serpentwing, will naturally grant you your wish and send you to the depths of the eighteenth level of Hell.”

Serpentwing immediately charged out of his nest.

If they were on the surface of the lake, Serpentwing would be afraid of an ambush. But the bottom of the lake was his territory. Humans who entered it wouldn’t be able to use a tenth of their power; even if Yichuan had entered, he would only at most be able to wound Serpentwing.

“Ji Ning is actually as stupid as this? It makes sense. He’s just an eleven year old child. His power is great, and so he thinks he is a peerless talent, and he has no regard for anyone. You killed my boy

Redtip. I will definitely kill you.” Serpentwing, upon leaving his nest, immediately transformed into his enormous winged serpent form, swimming at high speed.

“So it really is him!”

Serpentwing suddenly came to a halt. Staring into the distance, he saw that from afar, Ning was already very close to the bottom of the lake, and a cylindrical downwards corridor was constantly being created, with a human youth slowly walking downwards.

“He really did come to the bottom of the lake.” Serpentwing’s red eyes were filled with a murderous light. “He really is asking for death.”

Hua…

He quickly swam over.

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Ning was wielding the Darknorth sword in his hand, striding on the water as he walked towards the bottom of Serpentwing Lake. Wherever he walked past, the waters of the lake naturally parted to form a corridor.

“Hrm?” Ning immediately saw that enormous black shadow draw close to him.

“Serpentwing!” Ning immediately recognized him. As the enormous black shadow drew near, that ferocious head of Serpentwing’s grew clearer as well. Those scarlet red eyes were staring angrily at Ning.

“Ji Ning!” Serpentwing let out a furious howl, his voice ringing out. “You killed my son. Today, I will make you pay for it with your life!”

Ji Ning roared back, “Old monster, you have slaughtered humans in the thousands. You caused the death of Spring Grass, and today, I will personally execute you!”

The original cause of so many things!

So many people had died. Spring Grass had died. All of this came from the enmity between himself and Serpentwing.

“Hahaha, you will execute me? Little child, you truly don’t know your own limits. You actually dare to come into the depths of the water… once you are within the water, you won’t be able to return to the surface of the lake until your next life!” Serpentwing was supremely confident. “Your father wounded me multiple times, but I will let him share the pain of losing a child with me!”

As soon as his words came to an end, Serpentwing suddenly scurried forward, charging straight towards the corridor which Ning had created.

“Hua…” First, a serpentine tail pierced into the watery corridor, smashing straight towards Ning. Serpentwing’s current speed and power…was immeasurably greater than the Azure Skysnake’s.

“He lives up to being a peak Xiantian-level Diremonster.” Ning was startled. In terms of speed alone, the late Xiantian-level Serpentwing was actually somewhat weaker than the Azure Skysnake, but in strength he was definitely above the Azure Skysnake. But now, even in terms of his weakness, speed, Serpentwing was superior to the Azure Skysnake.

As for his strong point, power, Serpentwing had reached an awe-inducing level.

“Old monster, prepare for death!” Ning immediately utilized his Windwing Evasion, transforming into blurred smoke that was even faster than the whipping attack of the serpentine tail of Serpentwing, immediately leaping onto the body of the snake.

“Roaaaaaaaaaar.” Serpentwing turned his head, opening his foul maw and biting down towards Ning.

Ning, wielding his Darknorth swords in his hands, leapt up and

directly stabbed towards Serpentwing’s serpentine head.

Chapter 7 – Painting Serpentwing Lake with Blood

Serpentwing's giant bloody maw spat out a watery arrow of liquid. Swish! Swish! Swish! Gleaming with black light, the venomous liquid spread out towards Ji Ning, who didn't dodge at all. The Darknorth sword in his left hand immediately executed the 'Watertight' technique, deflecting the venomous liquid to one side, and it landed on Serpentwing's own body.

"Crackle…" Serpentwing's scales were immediately set alight, but then afterwards the venomous liquid sank into Serpentwing's body, absorbed by him.

Ning's left hand had pushed aside the venomous liquid. His right hand was stabbing straight for Serpentwing's head!

His sword flashed like a ray of light!

Hua!

This sword contained the power of the True Meaning of the Waterdrop, and was so fast that it caused even Serpentwing to be shocked. He hurriedly tried to twist his head away.

"Raindrop!" Ning's eyes were filled with a cold, flashing light. "PIERCES ROCKS!!!"

The sword light flashed straight through the side of Serpentwing's head, piercing straight through those scales and then burrowing straight through the side of his head. Beneath the injury, one could faintly even see the white skull bone, and an enormous amount of green blood sprayed out from the wound.

"He actually injured me?" The old monster, Serpentwing, went completely berserk. He wildly swung his head, his enormous scaled wings quickly sweeping towards Ning as well, and even his serpentine tail struck out, seeking to constrict Ning. For a moment it seemed as though he had been possessed, and the waters of the

lake around them began to bubble and froth.

Ning, wielding his two swords, moved like a shadow. “Not only will I injure you, I will kill you!”

Although Serpentwing was stunned at the power of the swordplay Ning had displayed, he refused to believe that he, an old monster who had been training for a thousand years, would be defeated by this little human child. What’s more, Ning was the one who killed his most beloved child, Redtip…in this moment, Serpentwing had only one thought – kill Ji Ning!

Huahuahua…

The waters of the lake swirled about, and the enormous scaled wings as well as that unpredictable serpentine tail attacked wildly. The waters of the lake was the domain of the aquatic monsters, and here, Serpentwing was like a tiger who had been given wings.

Using the principles of ‘using generals against soldiers, using earth to block floods’, Ning continued to use appropriate, matching techniques to deal with the attacks. His sword techniques flashed out, leaving behind one wound after another on the serpentine tail and scaled wings of Serpentwing.

“How is this possible!”

“How can he possibly defeat me!”

“Die! Die! Die! I will make you die!” The old monster Serpentwing was now completely berserk.

Ning continued to battle against him, and occasionally, with but a glance, he would create a fire lotus petal or a water lotus petal. The fire lotus petal and water lotus petal would appear directly above and below Serpentwing, boxing him within. As the fire lotus petal and water lotus petal slowly swiveled in opposite directions, Serpentwing began to howl as his scales began to crack. “FORM!”

Above his head, a layer of frost rapidly appeared, while at the same time, his serpentine head shook violently, dispersing the Waterflame Lotus.

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They battled wildly within the lake, causing utter chaos. None of the lesser aquatic monsters dared to draw near.

Serpentwing's body was covered with multiple gaping wounds, and green blood oozed everywhere, staining the surrounding lake water green.

Above the lake.

Ji Yichuan, dressed in white fur, stood there with Yuchi Snow. The entire surface of the lake was shaking wildly, as though deep within the lake, an enormous aquatic monster was shaking.

"Such a large commotion." Yichuan's eyes lit up.

Snow nodded as well. "It seems Ning is giving that old monster Serpentwing a great deal of pressure. Otherwise, there wouldn't be such a large commotion. Look, the water of the lake is turning green, and there are corpses of fishes and prawns." The nearby undulating waters of the lake were beginning to have corpses of fish and prawns float on the surface. Clearly, they had been poisoned.

Yichuan took a sniff with his nose. "This is the blood of Serpentwing. His blood is highly venomous. Even after having been diluted by the lake water, most fish and prawns will be poisoned to death by it."

"He has lost so much blood." Snow's amusement became even more pronounced. "Ning's power has improved greatly."

"Right. To let a peak Xiantian-level old monster like Serpentwing lose so much blood is indeed very impressive." Yichuan was very eager as well.

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Serpentwing had already used all the power available to him, but he still had yet to even injure Ning. Instead, his body was now covered with wounds, all inflicted by the sharp Darknorth swords in Ning's hands.

"After I reached the peak Xiantian stage, in this area controlled by the Ji clan, there's only a few people more powerful than me! All of them are extremely famous…how could this punk Ji Ning be so powerful? Most likely, not even that Ji Lee is a match for him." Serpentwing, after going berserk for a time, had calmed down, and had begun to plan for a retreat.

The power Ning had displayed truly was astonishing.

As an old monster, Serpentwing's body was naturally powerful…the sword attacks of most Xiantian-level Ki Refiners probably wouldn't even break through his scales. But Ning's swords were incomparably sharp! They sliced right through, leaving massive wounds, or pierced right through, gouging great holes.

"In a few more years, won't this Ji Ning be even more powerful than his father?" The rage in Serpentwing's heart was quickly dissipating, leaving behind only terror and alarm. "There's no way I'll be able to outfight a freak like him. I'd best flee!"

Swoosh!

With a shake of his serpentine tail and a turn of his serpentine head, the two scaled wings began to tremble…and Serpentwing began to attempt to flee at high speed.

"Old monster Serpentwing, don't even think about fleeing!" Ning, currently standing on Serpentwing's body, simultaneously controlled the corridor of water while utilizing the Windwing Evasion technique rapidly.

"If I want to leave, I'll leave." Serpentwing bellowed. With a shake of

his tail, the waters of the lake immediately grew turbulent, and a surge of water immediately drenched Ning.

Immediately afterwards, Serpentwing felt extremely delighted.

A corridor formed by controlling water? Serpentwing was an aquatic monster who could also control water. To destroy it would naturally be extremely easy. If he wasn't able to beat Ning, could it be that he also wouldn't be able to flee?

"Huh?" Serpentwing suddenly, vaguely felt a terrifying threat appear. He couldn't help but to turn his head and look.

In the lake waters behind him, Ning was currently standing upright and floating, surrounded by countless sword-type magic treasures. Every single one of them was covered with a faintly glowing light. A glowing sword of light formed from Xiantian ki that had been passed through and transformed by over three hundred flying sword magic treasures was currently hovering next to Ning, flickering.

"Magic treasures? So many magic treasures?" Serpentwing was stunned.

Swish!

The glowing sword of light flashed, instantly traversing hundreds of meters. Serpentwing could sense that this glowing sword of light contained boundless power. He wanted to turn his head to dodge it, but the glowing sword of light only curved slightly when arcing, and thus still pierced with great precision straight through the center of Serpentwing's serpentine head.

Bang!

The sword of light pierced straight through Serpentwing's skull, carrying with it green blood as well as some brain tissue.

"Aaaaah!" Serpentwing stared at Ning in astonishment. "This formation, formation…"

“You should feel honored that you died beneath this sword formation.” Ning slowly walked over, and the waters of the lake parted before him. Serpentwing’s eyes grew dim, and then his enormous body began to slowly drift downwards…

This old monster of Serpentwing Lake, who had been treated as a local tyrant for thousands of years, had died!

Watching the corpse of Serpentwing slowly drift down, Ning had very complicated feelings in his heart. It was this old monster who had gone to Western Prefecture City to attack him…resulting in this chain of events. When he had gone out adventuring and exploring, he had treated Serpentwing as his ultimate goal. Although Serpentwing had broken through to the peak Xiantian level in power, Ning had still executed him!

“Collect.” Ning grabbed Serpentwing’s enormous corpse. With but a thought, he stored it into an empty storage-type magic treasure. Although Serpentwing’s corpse was massive, when rolled up, it could still fit into one of the storage-type magic treasures. Although Ning didn’t have many other things, he had nearly a thousand storage-type magic treasures.

“Time to go back up.” With but a thought, the waters parted above him, and Ning began to walk upwards.

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Yichuan and Snow were standing atop the lake, waiting.

“No more movement?” Snow looked at the slowly calming waters. “There’s nothing going on down there any longer.”

“Serpentwing was most likely unable to do anything to Ning.” Yichuan said. “Thus, he probably retreated. This battle has come to an end.”

Snow looked at her man. “Can’t it be that Ning executed that old monster?”

“Executed? In the water, that old monster can battle when he wants and flee when he wants. Beating him is easy, but executing him? Hard, hard, hard.” Yichuan had personally fought with Serpentwing a few times. He couldn’t help but shake his head. But then his eyes lit up, and he stared into the distance. “Look. Ji Ning is coming out.”

Snow turned to look as well.

From afar was the island in the center of Serpentwing Lake. A white wave was rising up next to the island, and the wave then parted, creating a corridor. A youth dressed in beast furs was walking through the waves, heading straight for the island.

“Ning!” Snow immediately called out.

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Ning had been walking on the waves and heading for the island, but in his ears, he suddenly heard that familiar call. “Ning!”

“Mother?” Ning was stunned, and he hurriedly turned to look.

From afar, he saw Ji Yichuan, dressed in white furs, and Yuchi Snow. They were rapidly running towards him on water. This sight caused Ning to be both astonished and delighted.

Yichuan and Snow landed on the island.

“Ning.” As soon as she had arrived, Snow immediately grabbed her son by the hand, carefully inspecting him.

“Don’t worry. Even if Ji Ning was wounded, given the strength of his Fiendgod body, he will quickly recover.” Yichuan looked towards Ning, his eyes filled with satisfaction. “To be able to battle with a peak Xiantian-level Diremonster and cause him, Serpentwing, to flee helplessly…Ning, you have improved even more than I predicted.”

Ning was startled, and then he quickly said, “Father, I executed the Diremonster, Serpentwing.”

Chapter 8 – Ji Ning's Gains

"You executed Serpentwing?" Ji Yichuan looked at his son, and by his side, Yuchi Snow stared in disbelief as well. The two of them knew that their son wasn't the type of person to tell lies, but this was simply too…when the experts of the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan had battled Serpentwing numerous times, they hadn't been able to execute Serpentwing.

Ji Ning said hurriedly, "Father, please look." With a wave of his hand, out of nowhere, an enormous thing covered in wounds appeared in the pool next to them. Those enormous scaled wings, that viscous green blood…they all testified to this creature's identity.

"Serpentwing?"

"Serpentwing?"

Yichuan and Snow looked at the enormous corpse. They couldn't help but exchange a glance.

"It seems my son's strength…his strength is quite extraordinary." Yichuan said. "Not only did he kill Serpentwing, he also was able to store Serpentwing's corpse within storage-type magic treasures."

"Father. Mother." Ning didn't hide anything. "When I was adventuring at Eastmount Marsh, I encountered the Ironwood clan's Ironwood Zhan."

Yichuan and Snow were both startled.

Ironwood Zhan?

That was a dangerous foe.

"He probably was there to deal with the Azure Skysnake to try and force it to become his slave." Ning said. At this point, he began to sigh a bit as he thought back to how he and the Azure Skysnake had

battled repeatedly with each other, with the two being unable to harm each other, and how slowly, they began to build respect for each other as opponents. In the end, as he did not find the Azure Skysnake's corpse within Ironwood Zhan's storage treasures, nor did he see the Azure Skysnake become a tamed slave, Ning understood that the Azure Skysnake, at that critical juncture, had probably developed its natural ability, 'Void Blink'.

An Azure Skysnake who had developed the Void Blink technique was like a carp who had transformed into a dragon! It had definitely left the Swallow Mountain area to roam the world in search of natural treasures…

It was hard to say if they would ever meet again.

Ning quickly returned to his senses. "When Ironwood Zhan battled the Azure Skysnake, I took the chance to flee, and I fled over a thousand kilometers out of the mountain forests…and by the side of a pool, as I rested, I was lucky enough to suddenly gain an understanding of the Dao."

"An understanding of the Dao?" Yichuan and his wife exchanged glances. They held their breaths.

"I spent an entire night comprehending the Dao, but I didn't expect that in the end, I was disrupted by the pursuing Ironwood Zhan." Ning shook his head. "However, in my fury, I immediately utilized the Yin and Yang power, fusing it into the Crimsonbright divine power. Heavenly water and fire descended upon me, transforming me into a Xiantian Fiendgod's body as I became a Xiantian lifeform. At that time, my power dramatically increased, and I then first killed Ironwood Zhan's spirit-beast, that Bi'An Tiger, and then Ironwood Zhan himself!"

Yichuan said in surprise, "You killed Ironwood Zhan?"

"Right." Ning waved his hand, and within it appeared a black rattan whip. "This is Ironwood Zhan's personal weapon."

Upon seeing the Blackwood Vinewhip, Yichuan nodded and sighed in approval. “This is indeed his Blackwood Vinewhip. As soon as you reached the Xiantian level, you defeated and slayed Ironwood Zhan. It seems as though that night you spent comprehending the Dao helped you improve quite substantially.”

Ning nodded. “That night, as I comprehended the Dao, I gained insight into a hint of the True Meaning of the Dao.”

“The True Meaning of the Dao?” Even Snow called out in shock.

“Was it truly the True Meaning of the Dao?” Yichuan didn’t dare to believe it either.

In raising one’s level of enlightenment, the higher one went, the harder it became.

Above the level of ‘one with the world’ was the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’! Even most Zifu Disciples hadn’t reached the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’ level! Yichuan, in the past, had only managed to reach this level thanks to special circumstances, and in addition, this was something which the Ji clan had held as a secret and never made public. Others only believed Yichuan to be at the ‘one with the world’ level.

“My son is only eleven.” Snow’s eyes were shining. “But he’s actually reached the level of the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’, and is training in what is acknowledged as the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]. With this sort of talent, it would be exceptionally easy for him to be accepted for tutelage by some of the major powers.”

“No rush, no rush.” Yichuan looked at his son. “Are you able to actually utilize the True Meaning of the Dao that you comprehended?”

Comprehension was one thing, but being able to utilize it was another thing altogether.

At the ancient aquatic estate, Ning had been in a near-lethal situation when he finally managed to execute the 'True Meaning of the Raindrop'.

"Father, please watch." The Darknorth swords appeared in Ning's hands, and he shot a sword into the air. Hua! The tip of the sword seemed like a drop of rain, causing the air around it to ripple violently.

"True Meaning of the Raindrop!" Yichuan nodded repeatedly. "This is the True Meaning of the Raindrop. That night you spent comprehending the Dao allowed you to be able to put the True Meaning of the Dao on display through your swordplay? This is...this is..." Yichuan didn't even know what to say. Swallow Mountain, at least, had never seen such a monstrous talent.

Most likely, only in those distant, super-massive tribes would an equivalent talent exist.

"I was only able to comprehend the True Meaning of the Raindrop in a hidden area." Ning said. "I imagine, Father and Mother, that you both knew that I was trapped within a hidden area."

The couple hurriedly nodded.

"Your son suddenly disappeared, and caused you such worry, Father, Mother..." Ning, after seeing his parents, quickly understood this. His father had no doubt been unable to sense the jade sword, and thus had frantically rushed over. After all, the aquatic palace was in a completely different dimension. How could his father sense the jade sword there? At that time, most likely his father was worried that he was dead. Ning could completely guess at how his father and mother had felt, having been worried for so long. He couldn't help but feel rather ashamed.

"This isn't your fault." Yichuan sighed. "When I was adventuring back in the day, I saw multiple relic sites, but never entered them. Although relic sites offer great opportunities, perhaps not even one

out of a hundred will come out of a site alive. Your mother and I are very happy that you came out of it alive."

Snow gently rubbed her son's hair as well.

Over this past month, she truly had been very worried.

"But I imagine in that hidden area, your gains were quite substantial. You were actually able to execute Serpentwing in one encounter." Yichuan said. He didn't believe that his son would be able to kill Serpentwing solely after having comprehended the True Meaning of the Raindrop. After all, Yichuan himself had long ago gained insight into the True Meaning of the Raindrop. In addition, Yichuan had merged every single one of the nine sword techniques of the [Raindrop Sutra] with the True Meaning of the Raindrop, and yet was still unable to kill Serpentwing.

"Right. I received the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]." With a wave of his hand, Ning retrieved those multiple pieces of fur parchment, offering them to his parents.

Although the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was a secret, there was no need for Ning to hide anything from his parents.

"[Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]?" Yichuan and his wife both took a look, but as soon as they did, their faces changed.

"This, this..." Yichuan and his wife were completely stunned. They were quite experienced, especially Snow, whose lineage was extraordinary. They were quickly able to tell how special this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] was.

Yichuan couldn't refrain from saying, "This [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is even more powerful than any of the 'ultimate techniques' of our Ji clan. Snow, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] is most likely comparable to your tribe's [Windwing Evasion] technique."

Off to one side, Ning couldn't help but sigh.

That which Fiendgod Body Refiners needed most was divine abilities! But every single divine ability, even in the Fiendgod era, was not permitted to be taught to outsiders. Not even the old black bull in that ancient aquatic estate had known any. It was only because the Yuchi clan had helped that Celestial Immortal and saved his life that they had gained a 'divine ability'. The value of a divine ability was perhaps even greater than that of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]! Fortunately, his mother had given this 'divine ability' to him, as otherwise, who knows how long it would have taken before he would have had a chance to learn his first divine ability?

"This [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] possesses extraordinary power. It is a peerless formation technique that can allow a person to battle at a higher level of power." Yuchi Snow said. "Only, the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] has very high requirements for magic treasures as well as the soul. This is its weakness."

"Right. Several hundred magic treasures. Who can acquire so many?" Yichuan nodded as well.

But Ning said, "Father, Mother, in the hidden area, I acquired many unranked magic treasures. Simply too many." As he spoke, he brought out the storage armguard and gave it to his parents, while at the same time, Ning withdrew all of his personal ki from within the magic treasures, so as to allow others to more easily bind them."

"Too many?" Yichuan accepted the armguard, puzzled. He quickly bound the armguard, and as soon as he investigated it, he couldn't help but reveal a look of shock.

"What is it?" Snow immediately asked.

"The number of magic treasures...is most likely in the thousands." Yichuan sighed.

"So many!" Snow was shocked as well. Although they didn't care about unranked magic treasures, there were 'thousands' of them within. Even the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan would be envious of

such a fortune.

Ning added, “Those magic treasures are useless to me. I’ll hand them to Father and Mother for you to dispose.” He had dozens of storage treasures and over a thousand sword-type magic treasures, as well as various other scattered magic treasures, such as wing-type magic treasures…which was very suited for him to train in the [Windwing Evasion] technique. The scattered treasures also included some Dao-seals, formations, and others items.

As for the thousands of storage treasures, blades, whips, staffs, spears, and axes, he might as well give all of those to his father.

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Ning had first acquired the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], then shown off so many magic treasures. His parents had yet to fully recover, before Ning spoke once more. “This time, in the hidden area, I acquired a treasure. This will be of true benefit to our Ji clan.”

“What is it?” Yichuan and Snow immediately looked over.

With a wave of Ning’s hand, a beast fur scroll appeared. Atop the beast fur scroll, a sun and a moon hung high in the sky, sparkling with boundless light down upon a Buddha.

“A visualization technique!” Yichuan and Snow simultaneously spoke out.

Ning said with surprise, “Father, Mother, you know already?”

“How could we not know?” Snow stared at the painting of the Buddha. “In the past, my Yuchi clan also had a Visualization painting, but afterwards, the Visualization painting was lost in a struggle with another tribe. But Ning, this visualization technique is a technique which can allow one to strengthen the soul. The soul is a person’s foundation. While normally it is hard to see the benefits of a strong soul, the benefits are invisible and tremendous. You should leave this with you and use it at all times.”

Ning hurriedly said, “In the hidden area, I was fortunate enough to have a Visualization painting imprinted directly into my memory! It is even clearer than this!”

Snow, understanding the situation, said joyfully, “My son’s karmic luck is extraordinary. According to legends, the ancestor of my Yuchi clan met a Celestial Immortal, who with but a single finger point imprinted the Visualization painting directly into his soul. It was even clearer than the painting, and it could be visualized at all times. I didn’t expect that in this hidden area, my son would also have such a stroke of fortune.”

Ning thought back to how, while he was being reincarnated, he had run into the Lord of Cui Palace in the Netherworld Kingdom, and how the Lord of Cui Palace had also used a single finger to imprint the [Nuwa Painting] into his soul’s memory.

“Father, Mother, the name of this visualization technique is the [Inner Visualization of the Sun-Moon Buddha].” Ning added.

“Ji Ning.”

Yichuan’s heart was pounding as he looked at his son. “This [Inner Visualization of the Sun-Moon Buddha] will have a long-lasting impact on the Ji clan. I will immediately take it back. However, this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] should not be publicized for now. It is too hard to train in, and aside from you, no one in the Ji clan is capable of bringing forth the power of this [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. After your own strength improves in the future, you yourself can decide whether or not you want to publicize it. As for those unranked magic treasures, I will help you dispose of them.”

“Let it all be as you decide, Father.” Ning replied.

Chapter 9 – The Marquis of Stillwater

Ji Yichuan looked at his wife. “Snow, Ji Ning’s strength can be considered at the absolute top for all below the Zifu Disciple level. The Swallow Mountain region is unable to contain him any further.”

Snow nodded as well. She understood what her man was saying.

“Huh?” Ji Ning looked at his parents, somewhat puzzled.

Yichuan said, “Ji Ning, you should know about the six great powers here at Swallow Mountain.”

“I know.” Ning nodded. “Swallow Mountain has six local hegemons. They are our Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, the Blackfire Cult, the Ironwood clan, and Snowdragon Mountain. Of the six hegemons, our Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, and the Blackfire Cult are allies, while the Ironwood clan and the Snowdragon Mountain are allied!”

The six major hegemons of Swallow Mountain were arrayed into two alliances, and the battles between them were very fierce, with Xiantian lifeforms often dying.

Yichuan continued, “But are you aware of the reason as to why the alliance between the Ironwood clan and Snowdragon Mountain is capable of forcing us other four hegemons to ally together?”

“I am not.” Ning shook his head.

These secrets were not recorded in any books.

“The six great powers are all guarded by Zifu Disciples.” Yichuan looked at his son. “Your power is most likely already invincible against anyone below the Zifu Disciple level. In a few more years, you will most likely become a Zifu Disciple, so I must tell you these things now!”

“That Ironwood clan is not worth mentioning!” Yichuan said seriously, his eyes filled with a murderous light. “But the Snowdragon Mountain is a truly formidable enemy. They are truly frightening. In our Swallow Mountain region, Snowdragon Mountain is merely a single branch of the true Snowdragon Mountain Sect.”

“A branch?” Ning was stunned.

Of the six hegemons, Snowdragon Mountain was the most powerful force. But this Snowdragon Mountain was merely a branch?

Yichuan looked at his son and said solemnly, “The power of the Snowdragon Mountain Sect is thousands of times greater than that of Swallow Mountain’s Snowdragon Mountain Branch, and thousands of times greater than our Ji clan! This is a colossal, top-tier clan which is not inferior than your mother’s Yuchi clan!”

Yuchi Snow looked at her son as well. “The [Windwing Evasion] includes the history of my Yuchi clan. My Yuchi clan is an extremely ancient, top-tier large clan. Clans like the Ji clan…are completely incomparable to the likes of my Yuchi clan. But of course, that was all in the past.

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Ning, hearing his parents speak of these things, instantly had a desire to learn more about this boundless world. The Yuchi clan, Snowdragon Mountain, and those legendary, distant top-tier clans. They were all so far away from Swallow Mountain.

“Ning, do you know how large the Grand Xia Dynasty is, exactly?” Snow looked at her son.

“I do not.” Ning shook his head.

The Grand Xia Dynasty had been founded in the Fiendgod Era, and had destroyed other ancient dynasties to unify this vast world. It had existed for trillions of years! The books which described the territory of the Grand Xia Dynasty all used the same word: Boundless!

How enormous would such a dynasty be? How deep would its roots be?

“When the Grand Xia Dynasty unified the world, it divided the world into 3600 commanderies, and also assigned 800 Marquises!” Snow said slowly. “Because the world is simply too vast, even Immortals and Fiends found it difficult to govern it. Thus, they divided it into 3600 commanderies. Amongst these 3600 commanderies, there are large ones and small ones, but even the smallest are extremely vast.”

“Swallow Mountain is under the governance of the Stillwater Commandery, which is the territory ruled over by the Marquis of Stillwater.” Snow said. “The commandery city of Stillwater is nearly a million kilometers away from us.”

“The commandery city of Stillwater? A million kilometers away from us?” Ning could completely imagine how in that distant, distant region, there was an incomparably ancient, vast, and bustling city. In that place, Immortals and Fiends congregated, their decisions impacting this entire enormous region.

Snow continued, “The commandery city of Stillwater is the seat of power for the entire Stillwater Commandery, a place where Immortals and Fiends reside. However, Stillwater Commandery is simply too vast, and there are tens of thousands of regions within it like our Swallow Mountain…thus, some of the most top tier clans, schools, and sects are all scattered throughout the area!”

“As large as that?” Ning held his breath.

“As the saying goes, the heavens are high and the ruler is far away. With the world divided into 3600 commanderies, the power of those Marquises in the territory they rule is absolutely monstrous.” Snow sighed. “The imperial city of the Grand Xia Dynasty is simply too far away. In history, there have even been some Marquises who rebelled. Those wars truly are wars where Immortals and Fiends slaughter each other and countless experts fall. Truly terrifying.”

Ning nodded.

The flaw of having an enormous territory was the difficulty one would have in governing it. Even the high and mighty Marquis of Stillwater was unable to completely govern his vast territory, and so he allowed the various tribes to slaughter and battle each other.

“After some of the Marquises revolted, the Grand Xia Dynasty, so as to better govern the various regions, began to frantically build one commandery city after another in the various commanderies, and even Swallow Mountain has over ten of these commandery cities.” Snow looked at her son. “Every single city has a matching ‘official writ’!”

“Official writ?” Ning listened carefully.

“Right. Official writ!” Snow continued. “By binding an official writ, that means you are in control of one of those commandery cities, and are in name one of the officials of the Grand Xia Dynasty. However, these official writs are ranked magic treasures, and thus only Zifu Disciples and above can bind them.”

“Swallow Mountain has ten of these commanderies within it.” Yichuan spoke out as well.

“Of the ten commandery cities, one is Swallow Mountain City, where the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty are stationed! Of the other nine cities, our Five Prefectures of the Ji clan is in control of one, the ‘Thousand Swords City’ of our Central Prefecture.” Yichuan explained. “The Riverbank clan, Kou clan, and Ironwood clan all have one as well.”

“The Blackfire Cult has two commandery cities. Snowdragon Mountain has three commandery cities.”

“Actually, long ago, the Ji clan, the Riverbank clan, the Kou clan, the Blackfire Cult, and the Ironwood clan all were considered part of the local tribes of Swallow Mountain.” Yichuan sighed. “Afterwards, when

Snowdragon Mountain acquired one of the official writs for one of the cities and got involved in this region, the Ironwood clan, the weakest of the clans, quickly threw themselves in with Snowdragon Mountain. However, we other four powers continue to resist."

"We are all officials of the Grand Xia Dynasty, and within our own commandery cities, it is forbidden for Immortal practitioners to battle each other. To disobey this rule is to challenge the Grand Xia Dynasty, punishable by death!"

Ning, hearing his father's explanation, couldn't help but frown. "Father, Mother, based on what you are saying, if Immortal practitioners are forbidden from battling within the commandery cities on pain of death, would it be very hard for one tribe to try and destroy another one?"

"Hard?"

Snow laughed coldly. "Easy! For example, Zifu Disciples have a limited lifespan. Upon death, the official writ becomes an ownerless object, at which point, the tribe will quickly collapse."

"Also, Zifu Disciples can't always stay within their commanderies. As long as they come out and are killed, then their official writs can be seized and their tribe will be finished."

"And then of course, there are some utterly lawless, large, powerful clans!" Snow said. "They will send people over to your commanderyity to assassinate the Zifu Disciples of your clan and take away your official writ. What can you do about it?"

Ning was stunned. "This..."

"Without any proof, what will you do?" Snow laughed. "But of course, the mightier a power, the more cautious they will be. Challenging the laws of the Grand Xia Dynasty is a capital offense. They wouldn't casually do such a thing, and even if they decide to, they would use some very secretive methods. All I am trying to tell you is that there

are many possible ways to destroy a tribe. You might not make trouble for others, but they might for you. In the end, the most important thing is strengthening one's self!"

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"The Marquis of Stillwater controls this vast region, but aside from the armies of the Grand Xia Dynasty stationed here, there is another squad of Immortal practitioners, known as the 'Raindragon Guards'. According to legend, only Wanxiang Adepts are allowed to join the Raindragon Guards! By relying on the Raindragon Guards, the Grand Xia Dynasty is able to better control its vast territory. Remember. The Raindragon Guards cannot be trifled with."

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"Ning, given your talent and comprehension, you would find it very easy to request tutelage under a major power. After you go out adventuring, it would be best for you to find a major school or power to take shelter under."

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Yichuan and Snow told their son many things. They knew that Ning would definitely advance onto a far greater stage, and perhaps even become a major figure in the entire Stillwater Commandery… naturally, they carefully instructed and warned him, telling him everything which they knew.

Only now did Ning truly understand how vast the world was. Only now did he know about the Raindragon Guards of the Grand Xia Dynasty, all formed from Immortal practitioners. Of the great army controlled by the Marquis of Stillwater. Of some of the top tier clans, schools, sects…and of course, many other clans that were powerful in their own localities, that had been able to control official writs for a long period of time. Below them, of course, were countless, innumerable minor tribes.

“Whew.” Ning’s heart was beginning to fill with ardor.

“Ji Ning, I will take away the corpse of Serpentwing. To outsiders, we shall simply say that I was the one to kill him.” Yichuan said. “After all, you are very young. If we were to publicize that you were the one who killed him, it will only cause endless difficulties.”

“I’ll let Father handle all of these things.” Ning said hurriedly. “Right, Father, I want to build a residence here at Serpentwing Lake. In the future, I will often live here.”

“Live here?”

Yichuan and Snow looked around them. This area was very peaceful.

“Right. This is a good place.” Yichuan nodded. “I will arrange for some people to help you build a residence here. Your mother and I will go back now. While adventuring, come back and visit us often.”

“I will. I will go back to West Prefecture City in a few days.” Ning nodded. He was going to take a trip to the Blacktooth Tribe to bring Spring Grass’ younger brother to West Prefecture City. This was the promise he had made to Spring Grass.

“Hurry back.” Snow gently stroked her son’s head.

“Right.” Ning nodded. He understood that this trip he had made into the Aquatic Manor had caused his parents great worry.

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That day, Ning led Autumn Leaf and Mowu back to the Blacktooth Tribe, mounted on their black beasts.

Chapter 10 – [Nine Scrolls On Formations]

The journey from Serpentwing Lake to the Blacktooth Tribe was a long one. Even with the black beasts travelling all day and only resting at night, three days time was needed.

Night time.

The campfire was blazing. Ji Ning and Autumn Leaf were by the side of the campfire, while Mowu was on watch, so as to not allow any impudent wild beasts to interrupt his young master.

“I haven’t had the chance to take a good look at the miscellaneous items I acquired in the Aquatic Manor.” Ning suddenly remembered that although he had gone through all those magic treasures he had acquired during the first and second trials, of the thousands of magic treasures and miscellaneous items he had acquired at the third trial, he had bound them then immediately battled that black-furred golem, then met with that old black bull. He hadn’t had any time to flip through them at all.

“One of the miscellaneous items I found in the first or second trial was a secret manual that is nearly as good as the [Raindrop Sutra]. The number of miscellaneous items in the third trial was several times greater than in the first two.” With a wave of his hand, Ning brought out one item after another, which he then made disappear afterwards.

Autumn Leaf just watched to the side, curious.

A long time later…

“Yet another secret manual, the [Clearwind Manual]?” Ning flipped through it, and was instantly delighted. “It’s actually a swordplay manual, and it directly instructs one in how to utilize the True Meaning of the Dao. It is comparable to the [Raindrop Sutra].”

Ning’s judgment and vision was much keener than before. After all,

he had gained insights into the True Meaning of the Dao, and as he carefully read the contents, he quickly could vaguely sense that the ultimate goal of this type of swordplay was to develop the 'True Meaning of the Clearwind'.

Actually, the deceased people in the corridor were all only at the Xiantian level, so how powerful or profound could the manuals they were carrying on them possibly be? Actually, a consummate skill such as the [Clearwind Manual], logically speaking, shouldn't even be in there. For example, Ning hadn't brought the [Raindrop Sutra] or the [Thunderflame Sword] with him. From this, one could tell that the previous master of this manual most likely came from an even more powerful, top-tier clan who didn't restrict manuals on this level too tightly.

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There really were many miscellaneous items in the third trials, and plenty of treasures as well. Ning found as many as three powerful techniques! After flipping through these manuals, Ning began to carefully inspect the other miscellaneous items, the ones that didn't look like manuals.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly flipped out a jade carving!

This was two foot long square piece of jade, and on the jade there was carved an image of an old man with a long beard.

"Wait!" Ning's eyes lit up, and he carefully inspected it. At first glance, he had thought that this was just a carving, but as he took a closer look...he felt as though the square jade piece was actually covered with countless small characters that formed some small images. These characters were the characters used in the Grand Xia Dynasty.

The characters were tiny! If an ordinary person saw it, they probably wouldn't even notice it, but Ning was no ordinary person. His visual acuity was astonishing, and he could see a housefly from a distance of ten kilometers! With such visual acuity, naturally he could read the

dense, tiny characters on the jade carving.

“How marvelous.”

“This piece of jade has hundreds of thousands of words carved onto it, and the countless works actually formed the image of a long-bearded elder.” Ning first exhaled in amazement, and then he began to search for the place where these characters originated. Soon, he found that in the leftmost upper corner, there were four prominent characters…

[Nine Scrolls on Formations]!

Ning’s eyes lit up as he carefully continued to read.

“I, Wu Daoyan, have focused exclusively on formation techniques for over eighty thousand years. I was lucky enough to survive the last tribulation, but I think that the next great tribulation in nine hundred years time, I will not be able to survive. I am unwilling for the essence of my formation techniques to be lost, and so I have recorded down the knowledge of my formation techniques within these nine scrolls! I hope that someone with the right karmic fortune will carefully learn and comprehend it!” The opening words caused Ning to feel delighted. Anyone who was capable of living eighty thousand years and yet still be subject to the Three Calamities and Nine Tribulations was almost certainly a Loose Immortal.

Immortal Juhua was able to live for millions of years, but most Loose Immortals weren’t able to live that long. Three Calamities, Nine Tribulations; the calamities were easy to avoid, but the tribulations were hard to escape. A great tribulation every nine hundred years! Each tribulation more powerful than the last, continuously accumulating until even a Loose Immortal like of Immortal Juhua, on par with a Celestial Immortal, would not be able to withstand it.

“The knowledge of a Loose Immortal regarding formation techniques. This is something that is no less valuable than the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation] or the [Windwing Evasion].” Ning immediately

understood how valuable this was. “With this knowledge regarding formations, someone actually went to enter the trials of the underground estate’s corridors. Jeeze…”

The person who acquired this knowledge on formations was most likely someone who was unskilled in formations. After all, the abstruse mysteries of formations were very hard to comprehend. Generally speaking, Immortal practitioners only knew how to set up formations; they didn’t understand the principles behind the formations. For example, Ning only knew how to set up and control the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation]. Immortal practitioners would generally prefer to spend their time in binding more powerful magic treasures, or more powerful magic techniques. Those who would lower their heads and study formations were indeed very rare!

And what’s more, formations were extremely abstruse and hard to understand, making researchers in formations even rarer!

Most likely, the person who received this didn’t understand it. Even up until the point of his death, he still hadn’t had any accomplishments, and thus he had gone to attempt the underground estate.

There was another possibility as well, that it was someone like Ning… someone who accidentally entered Serpentwing Lake and thus was forcibly teleported into the Aquatic Manor, then died within.

“No matter what happened, this [Nine Scrolls on Formations] is now mine. And here I was, wondering how it could be possible that, given there were thousands of storage treasures, signifying thousands of people, how could not a single one of them been carrying something truly valuable?” Ning said to himself joyfully. “I finally acquired a valuable treasure. Time to take a good look.”

He immediately lowered his head and began to read this [Nine Scrolls on Formations].

Formations could be set up using all sorts of things, and some truly miraculous, large-scale formations could even make the world itself part of the formation!

“Interesting.” Many people felt that the [Nine Scrolls on Formations] were dry and boring, but Ning began to smile as he read them. Formations required a high ability to compute and understand. One had to be able to calculate! Ning, in his previous life, was exceedingly smart. Because of his illness, he was unable to go to school, so he had to teach himself everything! He had taught himself through reading books online, and his knowledge had far outstripped those of the same age as him, especially in the sciences. Despite his young age, he had earned a vast fortune!

In this life, he had acquired the [Nuwa Painting] and was able to divide his mind, thus making his mental computational abilities even nimbler!

In the previous life, on Earth, the education system had taught Ning how to think. Although Earth was just one of trillions of little worlds, its educational system was far superior to this world’s, where, for example, Swallow Mountain was still at a tribal era of development… even the descendants of the Ji clan would generally only be able to read, while the members of lesser tribes wouldn’t even be able to recognize any characters.

Given this sort of level of education, it was only natural for everyone here to find it incredibly hard to analyze formations.

It can be said that although perhaps the skilled scientists of Earth wouldn’t necessarily all become formation experts, they would at least be very promising prospects in this regard.

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The education Ning had received in his past life was like ‘software’. In this life, Ning had an extremely powerful soul, which was like ‘hardware’!

Naturally, he was very well suited for training in formations!

“So that’s how it is.” Ning revealed a smile while reading. “That Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation and other formations like it truly are crude. They completely rely on activating the power of the world. There’s no skill at all in them.”

The more he read, the more Ning appreciated it.

But slowly, the smile on Ning’s face disappeared, and it was replaced by a frowning concentration, mixed with occasional stupefaction.

“Formation techniques really can’t be underestimated.” Ning nodded. “The way of formations is as vast and boundless as the seas. I’m only able to understand the most basic principles, but as soon as I see some slightly more abstruse, complex parts, I am completely lost. It makes sense. Although in this boundless world, most people are a bit stupid, there are still many geniuses as well. Upon focusing on something for hundreds or thousands of years, they will of course vastly exceed those of us on Earth.”

“Young master, the sun is up. We should head out.” Autumn Leaf suddenly called.

“Ah?” Ning suddenly discovered that it was already day.

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Formation techniques were as boundless as the seas. Upon understanding the first scroll of the [Nine Scrolls on Formations], one could be considered a formations expert. Unfortunately, Ning wasn’t able to completely understand even that first scroll. This caused him to become more humble and not feel so self-delighted.

“Through analyzing formations, I will have more options and more tactics available to me.”

“Also, when I use the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation], I can make it more nimble and won’t have to use it in such a static

manner.” Although Ning was just a basic student of this field, he now had a basic understanding of the way of formations, with the essence of it being ‘guidance’! For example, at first, when he stupidly just simultaneously controlled hundreds of flying swords, he had to spend effort controlling every one minutely, which was simply too mentally exhausting.

Fortunately, his soul was very powerful, and so he was easily able to execute the fourth level of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

But if he were an expert on formations, he would be able to have some of the critical swords ‘guide’ the other swords, which would greatly reduce the amount of load on his soul, and allow him to easily execute more powerful levels of the [Lesser Thousand Swords Formation].

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“Young master, the Blacktooth Tribe is up ahead.” Autumn Leaf called out.

Only now did Ning halt his pondering on formations. Raising his head, he saw that in the distance, the sentries of the Blacktooth Tribe had noticed them.

“It is young master Ji.”

“Quick, hurry and report this to the leader.”

The tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe had seen Ji Ning last time. This time, the three of them were once again travelling together, mounted on the three black beasts. They were quickly recognized.

As Ning and the other two arrived at the gates to the tribe, Blacktooth was there to personally welcome them.

“My respects to you, young master.” Blacktooth had a large group of tribesmen behind him, all of them kneeling in unison.

“Mm.” Ning nodded. “Take me to Spring Grass’ place.”

“Alright.” Blacktooth said hurriedly. The only person in the Blacktooth Tribe who had any sort of a connection to Ji Ning was Spring Grass.

Ning suddenly looked sideways, glancing a skinny toddler standing behind Blacktooth whose face was rather sickly, yet seemed similar to Spring Grass. Ning remembered seeing this toddler last time, and thus he spoke out. “What is your name?”

The toddler was stunned.

Blacktooth, following Ning’s gaze, turned to look at his son. He hurriedly said, “Quick, response to the young master’s words.”

Only now did the toddler stutter out, “My name is Bluestone!”

“Bluestone, Bluestone…” Ning gently murmured to himself.

Chapter 11 – Ji Ning is Here!

The toddler nervously looked at the youth riding on the black beast. He only felt that this youth was a very powerful figure. The entire tribe seemed to be afraid of him.

“Bluestone.” The youth dismounted from the black beast, then walked over and held his hand.

“Come with me. Let’s go to your big sister’s tomb and kowtow to your sister.” Ji Ning took Bluestone’s tiny hand, and Bluestone, stupefied, just let himself be led away, not daring to resist. By his side, Blacktooth and the other tribesmen naturally didn’t dare to argue.

And so, just like that, they made their way through the tribe before arriving at a large graveyard behind the tribe.

Once again, they came before that tomb.

“Spring Grass. I came.” Ji Ning had prepared some sacrificial items which he had prepared when passing through some of the nearby tribes along the way. He placed all of them in front of the tomb carefully, while at the same time saying gently, “That Riverside He of the Riverside tribe is dead now. Serpentwing of Serpentwing Lake is dead as well. Your enemies are all dead.”

As soon as these words were uttered, Blacktooth and the others next to him were startled. What? The Diremonster, Serpentwing, was dead as well?

“Bluestone should be your only remaining little brother.” Ning reached his hand out, pulling the dumbstruck Bluestone forward. “I swear before your tomb that I will definitely provide good tutelage to Bluestone”

Bluestone was somewhat stunned, but his father, Blacktooth, was incomparably delighted. He hurriedly said, “Thank you, young master.” He himself was just the leader of a small tribe. What sort of

a future would he be able to offer his son? But if someone as exalted as the young master of the Ji clan were to help out, then his son's future would be very different."

"As long as you don't oppose it." Ning glanced at Blacktooth. "In the future, I will be spending quite a long period of time by Serpentwing Lake. If you want to see your son, come to Serpentwing Lake and find me there."

"Yes." Blacktooth said respectfully.

"Bluestone, kowtow to your big sister." Ning looked towards Bluestone by his side.

"Okay." The toddler hurriedly knelt down and kowtowed three times.

Ning waved towards the side. "All of you can leave now."

"Yes, young master." Autumn Leaf included, everyone withdrew. Even Bluestone was led away by Blacktooth. In this wild, desolate graveyard, the only one remaining was Ji Ning.

"Just the two of us now." Ning withdrew a bamboo reed, beginning to drink wine. "Today, your young master will spend some time chatting with you. In the future, I'm afraid I won't be able to come visit you too often."

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Ning drank fruit wine in front of the tomb while chatting with 'Spring Grass'. In the blink of an eye, an hour passed.

"Huh?" Ning suddenly frowned. As a Fiendgod-like entity, his senses were extremely acute. He easily detected minute trembles in the ground. "Thousands of warriors! And the distance should only be twenty kilometers. Thousands of warriors, gathering twenty kilometers away? Can it be that a tribe is about to attack the Blacktooth Tribe?"

With regards to the struggles between the various tribes, the Ji clan usually pretended not to notice them.

“Blacktooth was originally a travelling merchant, and thus should be smooth and slick in establishing relationships.” Ning was puzzled. “Ever since founding this Blacktooth Tribe, no other tribes have ever attacked. Why has a tribe come to attack this time? And with thousands of warriors at that?”

“Let’s take a look.” Ning immediately rose.

Regardless of whether it was for Spring Grass or for Bluestone, he couldn’t just stand and watch with arms folded.

Although the Ji clan usually pretended to not notice these intertribal struggles, once they did interfere, the tribes they controlled naturally didn’t dare to disobey.

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Ning walked within the tribe, heading straight for the gates.

“Young master.” Mowu and Autumn Leaf hurriedly followed him.

“Young master.” Blacktooth led his tribesmen to follow him as well. Ning just barked, “Twenty kilometers outside of here, thousands of warriors are gathering and advancing towards us. Right. There should be two to three thousand of them. Your Blacktooth Tribe needs to immediately prepare.”

Blacktooth was shocked. “Two or three thousand warriors? Impossible. Only an enormous tribe would be able to mobilize two to three thousand warriors. A tribe of that size wouldn’t bother with our Blacktooth Tribe. Our entire population, including women, children, and the elderly only number one thousand or so. We aren’t worth such a large military mobilization!”

“If I say it is so, then it is so!” Ning glanced at him sideways, saying nothing more.

“Right.” Blacktooth naturally didn’t dare to say anything else, and he hurriedly began to shout. “Quick quick quick, enemies are coming to attack! Quickly, gather around!”

“Rumble…” A low beast horn sound quickly rang out, filling the entire tribe. The muscular warriors of the tribe, the elderly and the womenfolk, all grabbed their sabres, swords, spears, and bucklers, while all of the children hid themselves.

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Ning was staring into the distance at the gates, while all of the tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe were holding their weapons with bated breath in preparation. All of them were staring towards the distant mountain forests.

Slowly…

They began to clearly sense footsteps coming. After all, how could two or three thousand warriors on the march make no sound at all? This caused Blacktooth and the others to be all the more amazed. It must be understood that Ning had already informed them long ago of the rough number of people coming.

“So many.”

“So many warriors.”

The tribesmen of the Blacktooth tribe were all stunned. From afar, a densely packed swarm of human figures were emerging from the forests, with the ones in front armored. It was like a flood of metal coming their way at high speed, causing the Blacktooth Tribe’s members to feel their hearts turn cold.

“Halt!” The order came, and the three thousand warriors immediately formed ranks roughly half a kilometer in front of the Blacktooth Tribe’s gates.

“Blacktooth Tribe, listen up!” In front of the enemy troops, a

powerfully built bald man was bellowing. “We are from the Firewing Tribe. Quickly open your gates and surrender to us, and you have a chance at life. If you resist, those who resist shall all be killed, while the rest of the tribesmen shall be sold as slaves.”

The voice echoed in the air.

The Blacktooth Tribe was in a state of panic.

“What to do?”

“So many warriors. There’s thousands of them.”

“We’re finished.”

“Isn’t young master Ji here?” The Blacktooth Tribe had no fighting spirit at all now. First of all, their tribe was newly founded to begin with, as many of the tribesmen were gathered from those who had fled from other tribes. They didn’t have too strong a sense of loyalty to the Blacktooth Tribe yet. And secondly, the Blacktooth Tribe had less than five hundred tribal warriors, but in front of them there were three thousand!

Once battle began, they would quickly be defeated!

“Everyone in the Firewing Tribe!” Blacktooth hurriedly went forward and said loudly, “I don’t know why you have come to my Blacktooth Tribe. If you have any demands, our Blacktooth Tribe will naturally work hard to meet them.”

“Enough chitchat!” The bald man in front of the enemy lines bellowed back. “Surrender or battle!”

Ning frowned, glancing at Mowu by his side. Mowu nodded, then immediately walked forward while shouting, “Our young master Ji Ning is here. Leaders of the Firewing Tribe, why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!”

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“Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” “Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” “Why haven’t you come to pay your respects yet!” The voice echoed within the forests, causing a commotion amidst the Firewing Tribe as well.

In the center of the enemy formation, there was a group of men who were riding mounts.

“Young master Ji Ning?”

“The Ji Ning who was at the Riverside Tribe?”

“Aside from that Ji Ning, who would dare order the leaders to go pay their respects to him?” The high-level figures of the Firewing Tribe were all immediately stunned. The Firewing Tribe was also a large tribe with more than twenty thousand tribesmen, but because their tribe didn’t have any Xiantian lifeforms, thus they had already reached their limits and didn’t dare to expand any further. Compared to the Riverside Tribe, the Firewing Tribe was on a lower level.

The Riverside Tribe wasn’t too far away from them. With over a month having passed, these higher level members of the Firewing Tribe naturally all knew of what had happened, and had learned of Ji Ning’s name.

“Chief.”

“Chief.” All of them looked at black-bearded man whom was escorted in front of them.

By the side of the black-bearded man, a youth whose hair fell down his shoulders said in a low voice, “Nothing more than a descendant of the Ji clan. There’s no need to pay any attention to a descendant of the Ji clan in this sort of tribal war. Let’s do it.”

“Attack!” The black-bearded man immediately shouted loudly.

“What?”

“What? Attack?”

“Chief!”

The high level figures of the tribe who were around the black-bearded man were all stupefied. They didn’t expect that their chief, who was both valorous and wise, would act so stupidly. Given the chief’s status, he should clearly be aware of what the name ‘Ji Ning’ represented. If it was an ordinary member of the Ji clan, that was one thing, but this was Ji Ning, who had forced even the Riverside Tribe to lower their heads before him!

“Kill!” Those three thousand warriors were all ordinary tribesmen. How could they know what this name ‘Ji Ning’ represented? Hearing their chief’s orders, they immediately bellowed and charged forward.

“Kill!”

“Charge!”

Like an steel flood, the armored warriors in front charged forward, while the beast-fur clad men were behind them. The earth shook, and it seemed as though even the skies grew dark. The tribesmen of the Blacktooth Tribe were all stupefied, and some even began to cry out, “Surrender, we surrender!” “We’re finished.” “Quick, run.”

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Ji Ning, standing at the gates, watched as the dark, dense mass of people charged forward. Immediately, he was suspicious. “My name should be known to all of the slightly larger tribes, especially after I acted against the Riverside Tribe. It should have spread throughout the area under the control of the Ji clan. Why is the black-bearded leader still ordering an attack?”

Ning was puzzled.

The Blacktooth Tribe was a small tribe. It didn’t have much wealth. Mobilizing three thousand warriors to attack it was quite bizarre, in

and of itself. After hearing his, the enemy still decided to attack? That was all the odder.

However, just based on the fact that this Firewing Tribe dared to ignore his name, and just for the sake of the prestige of the Ji clan alone, he naturally had to act now.

“Hmph.”

In front of the gates of the Blacktooth Tribe, Ning suddenly leapt forward like a giant Roc in flight, instantly flashing through the air. At the same time he leapt up, enormous waves suddenly appeared out of nowhere in the area around him, and the incomparably turgid waves instantly formed like the waters of a flood. Huahuahua…the boundless waves rolled forth, smashing directly towards those three thousand tribal warriors.

“Waves.”

“Where did all this water suddenly come from?”

“Xiantian lifeform, a Xiantian lifeform.” The three thousand warriors were instantly terrified. They previously had high morale, but upon those rolling waves crashing upon them, all of them began to collapse and everything fell to chaos. These warriors all understood that only Xiantian lifeforms and Diremonsters were able to accomplish the ability to control fire, water, poisonous gases, and the like. If a Xiantian lifeform wished to do so, slaughtering three thousand men was simplicity itself.

Indeed, Ning didn’t actually wanted to slaughter them. He only controlled the waves to smash down upon them. If he used fire or ice to freeze or burn them to death, the scene would have been completely different.

“Hua!” With a single bound, Ning travelled over a kilometer, landing directly in front of that black-bearded figure, grabbing him by the neck.

Chapter 12 – Pursuit

Ji Ning instantly landed a kilometer away and grabbed the black-bearded leader, instantly terrifying the high level members of the Firewing Tribe. All of them hurriedly knelt down on wobbling knees and called out repeatedly, “Young master Ji Ning, spare us!” “Young master Ji Ning, don’t be angry!” “Young master Ji Ning, don’t be angry!”

The tribal warriors behind them who had not been hit by the waves, seeing the high level members of the tribe all kneel down, naturally all knelt down as well. At this time, the waves disappeared, and those knocked down tribesmen all knelt in terror as well.

Instantly, the black mass of men were all on their knees, aside from the black-bearded man Ning had seized.

“Pa!” With a toss of the hand, the black-bearded man was sent rolling twice on the ground.

“Young master Ji Ning.” The black-bearded man was shuddering.

“You don’t recognize me?” Ning looked at him.

The black-bearded man shook his man hurriedly. “No, no, I heard of young master Ji Ning’s fame long ago.”

“Then you still ordered an attack?” Ning frowned.

“I…I…” The black-bearded man didn’t know what to say for the moment. This caused Ning to be even more puzzled. The leader in front of him clearly knew his name, and was frightened of him. So why, then, had he dared to issue that order?

Ning shouted, “I ask you, why do you attack the Blacktooth Tribe?”

The black-bearded man immediately hesitated.

The high level members next to him said hurriedly, “Young master Ji

Ning, the Blacktooth Tribe is only a small tribe. Our Firewing Tribe didn't want to attack them at all! Only, the chief insisted on coming. We didn't oppose him, as it was just a small tribe and thus not worth it."

"This was the decision of the chief and the chief alone."

"We all opposed it."

"Half a year ago, the chief ignored our opposition and forcibly led the warriors out and destroyed a small tribe with only a few hundred people, and sold off everyone, man, woman, child, and elder alike as slaves to his good friend, Zig! Look, that one right next to the chief is Zig! The chief trusts him very much!" A silver-haired fur-clad elder pointed to the long haired youth next to Ji Ning.

Swoosh!

The kneeling long haired youth suddenly shot out a black light from his sleeves towards the nearby Ning.

"Clang!" Ji Ning's body was covered by beast furs, and underneath them he had magic treasures protecting him. Naturally, this attack was blocked.

"Hmph." Ning looked at the long haired youth, but discovered that the youth's face had already begin to turn black. At this moment, the other high level members of the Firewing Tribe were angrily howling and reaching out with their hands to seize the youth, planning to subdue him. "He dares to ambush the young master. He deserves death."

"Don't touch him!" Ning immediately barked.

But a muscular man of the Firewing Tribe who had charged in front had already touched the arm of the long haired youth. The pitch-black color on the arm of the youth instantly transmitted to the right arm of the muscular man.

“Swish!” Ning pointed out with a fingernail, and a ray of sword energy swung out, chopping the left arm of the muscular man off.

The long haired youth slumped to the ground, his entire body pitch black, and his seven orifices bleeding with black blood. That man whose arm had been chopped off by Ning had black blood flowing out of his severed arm as well.

“Poison!”

The surrounding Firewing tribesmen all retreated in surprise.

Ning’s expression was grave. “Such fierce poison.”

“Aaaaah!” The chief of the Firewing Tribe, that black-bearded man, suddenly called out, then hurriedly pointed at the corpse on the ground. “It was him! It was him! Young master Ji Ning, it was all him. He originally spat a mouthful of smoke at me, and I lost my faculties. Although I knew what was going on, I treated this Zig as my master and obeyed him from my heart. Whatever he wanted me to do, I would do. Even if he wanted me to die, I wouldn’t resist at all. When I heard your name, young master, it was he who ordered me to attack. I clearly didn’t want to offend you, young master, but as soon as he instructed me, I immediately gave the order.”

The black-bearded man stared in shock and fury at the corpse on the ground. “It was that mouthful of smoke.”

The high level members of the tribe, upon hearing this, were all awestruck.

“What?” Ning was surprised as well.

In the entire Swallow Mountain area, only the ‘Blackfire Cult’ was in possession of drugs that could control a person, but the most famous medicine which the Blackfire Cult had was the ‘Holy Fire Pill’. Upon eating the Holy Fire Pill, a person would become unswervingly loyal to the Blackfire Cult and not even fear death! Only, the ‘Holy Fire Pill’ of the Blackfire Cult wasn’t a breath of smoke.

“Anyone capable of creating this thing is definitely a very powerful warlock or alchemist.” Ning was secretly startled, and he turned to look at the leader. “Speak. What did this Zig want from you?”

“To buy slaves!” The black-bearded man said hurriedly. “He first bought slaves from us twice, over two thousand slaves! Afterwards, he controlled me and ordered me to swallow up some smaller tribes and have all the members of those tribes be sold as slaves to him. He would arrange for those people to be taken away.”

Ning was puzzled. What was the point of buying so many slaves? Generally speaking, tribes would buy slaves to use them for manual labor or as servants. Slaves had to eat as well, and providing enough food for so many wouldn’t be easy.

“His subordinates?” Ning asked. “Didn’t you say that he sent subordinates to take the slaves away? So many slaves, including women, children, and elderly, would have travelled very slowly. You should be able to find traces of them.”

“I can. I can.” The black-bearded man nodded hurriedly. “Ten days ago, his subordinates took a group of slaves away. They were headed towards the east. Two days ago, a hunting squad of our tribe saw that slaver squad. Most likely, in two days they couldn’t have gone too far. We should be able to find them quickly.”

Ning nodded.

“Mowu. Autumn Leaf.” Ning turned to look into the distance.

Mowu and Autumn Leaf immediately ran over.

“Young master.” The two looked at Ning.

“I have something to take care of.” Ning said. “The two of you, immediately send word to the nearest station of black armored guards, and have the hundred closest black armored guards to escort you and Bluestone to Serpentwing Lake. My father will arrange for a dwelling to be built at Serpentwing Lake, and you will

temporarily live on the island in the center of it."

"Yes." Mowu and Autumn Leaf assented.

"As for you." Ning looked at the black-bearded man. "You will immediately arrange for your hunter squads to provide me with two guides. I want to find that slaving squad."

"Yes, young master." The black-bearded man hurriedly said, and then roared backwards behind himself, "Threeknife, Cardcloth, come over here."

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Ning led the two guides on the backs of the black beasts, traveling by day while resting at night in hot pursuit. That squad, guiding hundreds of elderly and infants, naturally travelled much more slowly. They would at most be able to advance a hundred kilometers a day.

"Young master, there clearly are footsteps here." A swarthy man with braided hair said hurriedly. "The tracks are very clear. They should have been made less than a day ago. We will soon catch up to them."

"Alright." Ning nodded.

They continued the chase.

Soon, they saw a large cluster of figures. All of them, male and female, were fettered by the hands, with the rope being attached to a tree trunk. A group of men and women were bound all together, carrying a tree trunk. By doing so, anyone who attempted to flee would pull others with him, and once the movement became apparent enough, the slaver escorts would easily notice.

"Hurry, hurry up." The slaver escorts were soldiers wielding whips, and they would occasionally lash out with the whips. As for some of the toddlers, they were tied up and seated on horses, with eight or ten toddlers tied up on each horse, allowing them to move more

quickly.

The looks on the faces of the men and women were full of grief, and their eyes were filled with despair.

Half a month ago, they were in their own tribes, living peaceful, happy lives with their families. But now, they had become slaves and were being escorted to an unknown area.

“You two, take these three black beasts and return. Have your tribesmen arrange for them to be sent to Serpentwing Lake.” With a flip of his hand, Ning withdrew two beastheads of gold. “You made a trip with me. I won’t mistreat you.”

“Thank you, young master.” The two tribesmen hurriedly thanked him.

Ning nodded, then patted his black beast. He had ridden this black beast while adventuring. After having spent so much time with it, he was rather reluctant to part with it.

“You can go now.” Ning immediately dismounted, then began to travel by himself. After all, this squad was moving very slowly. There was no need for him to ride the black beast.

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The slaver squad continued to advance through the mountain forests. On the road, although they encountered some monstrous beasts, the slaver escorts were powerful experts, almost all of them peak Houtian level, with three of them being Fiendgod Houtian experts. They easily killed the monstrous beast.

“It is indeed odd.” Ning said to himself. “Large-scale purchasing of slaves, and using medicines to control the leader of a tribe to engage in the large-scale capture of slaves. Even the slaver escorts have peak Houtian Fiendgod practitioners.”

“Hurry up!”

“Hurry up.”

“We’re almost there.” The slaver escorts seemed to be rather happy.

Ning secretly followed from behind. This place was already at what was considered the border between the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, while up ahead was a chain of mountains.

This group of slavers were heading towards the mountain range.

“Enter the mountains.” The squad continued forward.

Ning moved from behind, but just as they arrived at the base of the mountain, the sun which been bright in the sky suddenly changed as soon as Ning followed them into the mountains. It was as though day had suddenly transformed into night. The area around them had turned pitch black, and only some faint details of the surrounding area could be made out. The entire area seemed to be covered with black fog.

The black fog was everywhere, and it was filled with a cold aura.

“A formation.” Ning immediately understood that he had entered a formation.

“Someone actually came to die. Hahaha!” An evil, ear-piercing laugh suddenly rang out. “Little human child, your flesh will definitely be very delicious. I will slowly devour you bite by bite.”

Ning stood there, staring into the endless black fog surrounding him. He could just barely see to a distance of ten meters. Beyond that, he couldn’t see anything. In his hands, the two Darknorth swords had already appeared.

Chapter 13 – Zifu Disciple

“Go ahead and kill me.”

“Even as a ghost, I won’t forgive you.”

“Aaargh!”

“No, no, no!”

Standing in the middle of the boundless darkness of the great formation, sounds could vaguely be heard from everywhere, as though many people were suffering terrifying torments. Ji Ning was secretly startled. “They wildly purchased so many slaves, and even controlled the leaders of some tribes to snatch up some slaves through battling other tribes. What are they doing!”

“No matter what, first I have to leave.” Ning stared seriously at his surroundings. With a ‘swoosh’, he charged forward, moving more than a kilometer. And then, he once more turned and began to sprint, retreat, leap forward…within the pitch black, foggy formation, Ning moved around at high speed for a long time, but no matter where he moved, he remained within the formation filled with the dark fog and cold air.

“Not good.” Ning’s face changed slightly. “This is no ordinary maze formation. I moved at such high speed and constantly changed directions, but the formation remained utterly stable. The person controlling this formation is most likely not a Xiantian lifeform.”

During this past month of pursuit, Ning had focused on training in the [Nine Scrolls on Formations] and had made some accomplishments. Although he was unable to easily defeat the formation in front of him, he was able to tell…this was far above the likes of simple formations such as the Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation. It was an extremely intricate formation, and a magic treasure capable of setting up this sort of formation would have to be considered a ranked magic treasure.

There was no way for a Xiantian lifeform to bind a ranked magic treasure.

“A person on the level of a Wanxiang Adept wouldn’t deign to act in such a manner in a place like Swallow Mountain. Nine out of ten… the person who set up this formation should be a Zifu Disciple, and one specialized in using poisons.” Ning quickly came to this conclusion based on what he had encountered previously.

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“Human child, I’m coming for you.” The ear-piercing laugh reverberated within the endless black mist.

Ning just stood there, completely unmoving, while at the same time, around him appeared three fire lotus petals and three water lotus petals. The two layers of lotus petals slowly swiveled around Ning in opposite directions…

“Hahaha!” A sinister laughter echoed.

Shua!

A shadow suddenly leapt forth from the dark mist, pouncing towards Ning. But when that shadow saw Ning being protected by the Waterflame Lotus, it paused slightly.

“Hmph.” Ning’s eyes had a fierce look flash past them, and he immediately charged forward, his Darknorth sword in his hand transforming into a ray of firelight as he executed the ‘Thunderflash Flint’, chopping the shadow in half.

Hua….

The shadow instantly split into mist, then glided backwards before reforming into a mutant beast. Hidden in the darkness, there was no way to clearly see the mutant beast at all.

“This isn’t a human child, this is a human Xiantian lifeform who has

been training for who-knows how many years!" The ear-piercing sound emanated out from the mist, travelling a long distance. "This human most likely broke through to become a Xiantian when very young, and so his features remain so very young. In addition, he has a protective lotus surrounding his body. The lotus flower around his body should be a magic treasure."

From far off in the distance, another clear, cold voice echoed forth. "If he isn't a Zifu Disciple, he doesn't matter. Just kill him."

"I'll handle it." The mutant beast in front of Ning, hidden in the mist, said directly.

Hearing this, Ning's face changed slightly.

If he isn't a Zifu Disciple, he doesn't matter. For someone to dare say something like this most likely meant that the person who set up this formation really was a Zifu Disciple! In addition, the one who had attacked just now was nothing more than a monstrous beast, most likely a spirit beast under the command of that Zifu Disciple.

"My Master said." The mutant beast in the mist slowly began to change positions, occasionally appearing here, and then over there. "When adventuring in the outside world, the younger a human you encounter, the harder they are to deal with. It looks like his words weren't wrong...but unfortunately, you ran into me!"

Ning just stood there calmly.

After a person reached the Xiantian lifeform stage, that person would no longer be a mortal, and his appearance would remain virtually unchanged. Only when he began to reach the limits of his life would he slowly age. Thus, elderly looking Xiantian lifeforms were virtually all over a century old. Ji Yichuan, who had first made his name echo in Swallow Mountain, and then had gone out adventuring for many years before bringing his wife back, was now nearly fifty, but he still looked exactly as he had when he was a youngster. If a Xiantian lifeform looked like a child, then that meant

that he became a Xiantian lifeform when he was a child.

Thus, the younger one appeared, the harder they were to deal with.

Even some Immortals might have the appearance of a child.

“Swish!” “Swish!” “Swish!”

Suddenly, three black rays shot towards Ning, but when they hit those swiveling lotus petals of fire and water which were protecting Ning, they just barely broke through the first layer of lotus petals, but the second layer successfully blocked them.

The enormous black shadow emerged from the mist, and an enormous claw grabbed towards Ning!

“Dang!” Ning’s sword light flashed, and the grab attempt was blocked while Ning himself dodged to the side.

“Eh?” Ning frowned as he looked. This was a mutant beast which looked like a panther. Ning was actually momentarily unable to recognize what sort of mutant beast this was, primarily because many mutant beasts had mixed lineages, which would often resulted in mutant beasts. The mutant beast in front of him could only be said to look similar to a Bi’an Tiger. Its body was extremely long. The mutant beast stared at Ning, its tail swaying. Its tail had circles of black bony spikes which, if struck onto a person’s body, would definitely be no weaker than a whip-type magic treasure striking a person.

Ning’s pupils contracted, and he transformed into a blur.

Windwing Evasion!

Swoosh!

Moving as fast as lightning, he pounced towards the mutant beast, and the mutant Diremonster’s twin claws snatched towards Ning as well.

“Raindrop Pierces Rocks!” A water-like sword light flashed past, seeming like a drop of water falling down, and with a thundering sound, that mutant Diremonster collapsed to the ground, rolling a few times before coming to a halt, no longer moving. Its head had a large hole in it, with blood and brain matter flowing outside.

Ning quietly landed on the ground, still holding his twin swords as he cautiously stared around himself. He only glanced sideways at the mutant beast. “Nothing more than a late-stage Xiantian level Diremonster!”

“Black Needle!”

“Black Needle!” From afar came the call of that cold voice. “Is that human dead yet? Black Needle! Black-”

Quickly, that clear, cold voice went silent.

“I killed the mutant, but he didn’t know about it. It seems that mutant beast wasn’t his spirit-beast.” Ning understood that there wasn’t necessarily only a single Zifu Disciple here in this mountain. It was very possible that a hidden power was here! But the person capable of setting up this sort of formation had to at least be a Zifu Disciple.

“This is big trouble.” Ning hadn’t imagined that in the Swallow Mountain area, at the borders of the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, such a powerful force was hidden.

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Ning was trapped within the great formation. The protective Waterflame Lotus swirled around him, and in his mind, he was constantly pondering formations. The [Nine Scrolls on Formations] were abstruse, especially those extremely hard to memorize diagrams, but Ning had still been able to forcibly commit the contents of the first scroll to memory. He was currently using the greater part of his mental power to analyze them.

“I have to break this formation. While trapped here, all I can do is

allow them to use whatever techniques they have against me.” Ning focused on analyzing the formation, while constantly hearing miserably cries, fierce curses. It seemed as though a true hell was hidden within this mountain.

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Ji clan of the West Prefecture. Snowfall Palace.

Ji Young was seated at the throne of the palace, while Ji Yichuan, Ji Lee, and others were all seated below him, their faces all solemn.

“In the past ten days.” Ji Lee’s voice was rather hoarse, and his eyes were rather red. “The Five Prefectures of our Ji clan has already had multiple Xiantian lifeforms disappear! We have neither found them alive nor found their corpses!”

“Prefecture Lord, who has come to the territory of our Ji clan to cause trouble?”

“Find them and destroy them.”

“I’ve almost gone crazy in the past few days. My close friend! I must find him and rescue him.”

The members of the Ji clan seated below couldn’t help but howl.

Ji Lee, glaring, let out a hiss, “My son has gone missing as well. I must find him, I must!” And then, he looked at the Prefecture Lord, seated in the throne. “Elder brother, up till now, how many Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing? Also, who exactly is acting against our Ji clan? Have we found the culprit?”

“Based on the news which the Central Prefecture just sent over, up till now, already twenty three Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing.” Ji Young shook his head. “And most of them are fairly powerful and quite famous Xiantian lifeforms! The Five Prefectures of the Ji clan have lost five of our Commanders who were outside. As for where they have gone, there’s no trace of them at all.”

“This is provoking our Ji clan. They show no regard for the Ji clan at all.” Lee bellowed.

Young’s eyes were red. “All the ones who went missing were quite powerful and were at least mid-stage Xiantian lifeforms. There were even late-stage Xiantian lifeforms, and even peak Xiantian lifeforms! They are running roughshod over our Ji clan, then pissing on our faces! We have to find the culprits! No matter how great the price, we must destroy them!”

Yichuan, seated to one side, spoke out. “They must be destroyed indeed. However, based on my experience, this power should have a Zifu Disciple guarding it.”

“Oh?” Everyone looked towards Yichuan.

Yichuan, after all, had gone adventuring outside. He had even gone to the Darknorth Seas. His experience was greater than theirs.

Yichuan continued, “There are two possibilities which have the greatest likelihood. The first is that it should be some sort of fleeing tribe, who lost their city and no longer have a base and were sent wandering...but the remnants of this tribe are still very powerful. Thus, they want to cause a battle here in Swallow Mountain and conquer a commandery city through it.”

With a commandery city, they would have their own territory. Only then would a tribe have a base!

“The second possibility is that it is a fleeing Immortal practitioner. The Immortal practitioners of some evil sects will use souls and corpses to train in some evil magic spells. Snatching Xiantian lifeforms is done because Xiantian lifeforms have more powerful souls, and can be better used to train in some magic spells.” Yichuan said.

“And the disappearance of Xiantian lifeforms,” Yichuan continued, “Based on the intelligence of our Ji clan, is not just limited to the Ji

clan, but also the nearby Ironwood clan! The Riverbank clan has Xiantian lifeforms missing as well. Only, we don't know how many Xiantian lifeforms they have lost. For them to act so wildly means that the power which has come to our Swallow Mountain is not weak. We absolutely must get revenge, and we must rescue the missing Xiantian lifeforms, but we cannot be rash. We need to first discover the true situation regarding the opponents, and then set a strategy to destroy them at one blow!"

Everyone in the palace went silent.

Chapter 14 – Revered Master

Ji Yichuan walked by himself on the stone brick road, his forehead furrowed in thought. He knew that this affair would be a tough trial for the Ji clan, but any organization which wanted to survive in this world would have to be able to endure repeatedly trials! After passing them, the roots of the clan would naturally grow deeper and grow more powerful. But if they weren't able to pass them, then the clan would be exterminated! It would be lucky if even a few survivors managed to flee and pass down the bloodline.

"Master.

"Master." Some of the servants knelt down on the side to welcome him.

Yichuan walked into his residence, then headed back to the place where he normally stayed. Suddenly, a female servant hurriedly rushed over. Upon seeing Yichuan, she was so frightened, she immediately knelt down.

"Why are you in such a rush? Consider your image!" Yichuan frowned and barked.

"Master." The female servant's face was white with tension. "Madame, Madame, she…"

Yichuan's face instantly changed. "What's wrong with Snow?"

"Madame fainted!" The female servant said frantically.

"Fainted?" Yichuan's face instantly turned white. As an expert Ki Refiner, how could she faint? If his wife fainted, there could only be one reason.

"Snow!" Yichuan instantly turned into a gust of wind, disappearing from that area.

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Within the room.

Yuchi Snow was quietly lying on the bed. Her face was rather pale, but her features were still so beautiful, so calm.

“Snow.” Yichuan instantly appeared within the room. Seeing his wife lying there, he hurriedly walked forward and carefully inspected her. He couldn’t help but glance at the female servant. “What exactly happened?”

The female servant was shaking in terror, and had knelt down long ago. “Master, the Madame had been drinking tea and was perfectly fine. Nobody touched the Madame, and nobody spoke with the Madame. But suddenly, the Madame’s body turned weak and she just collapsed. All of us panicked. I carefully lifted the Madame back into the room, while Keepleaf went to call you, Master.”

“How could this happen.” A look of agony was on Yichuan’s face. “How could this happen! Quick, quick, go have Shaman Cao immediately come over!”

“Yes.” The female servant immediately retreated, leaving behind only Yichuan and his wife in the room.

Yichuan sat at the side of the bed, looking at his wife. He stretched his hand out to stroke her face, murmuring, “Is this day truly here? When you gave birth to Ning, I feared that this day would come. I don’t believe it. I don’t believe it. You will definitely survive. I will accompany you and we will both watch our son become into an incredible hero.”

Moments later.

A big-bearded old man dressed in filthy animal skins walked in. His body naturally carried an herbal fragrance. Shamans and apothecaries were a group of people who had a great deal of experience in natural herbs and remedies. The boundless world was

a very miraculous place, and it had all sorts of curious types of things living within it. Even the most seemingly ordinary herbs, once combined in a certain manner, could have some unique effects.

This Shaman Cao was one of the most skilled in herbs in the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

“Shaman Cao.” Yichuan looked towards the big-bearded elder. “My wife just fainted for no reason. You take a look.”

“Commander, please step back.” Shaman Cao said in his hoarse voice, and Yichuan hurriedly moved to the side, stepping back to make way for him. Shaman Cao stretched out his dry hand, as skinny as a chicken claw, placing it against Snow’s forehead. Instantly, a spot of green light was birthed from Shaman Cao’s palm, and it began to slowly seep into Snow’s body.

A very strong herbal odor began to fill the area.

Shaman Cao closed his eyes. After a long time, Shaman Cao took his hand back. As for Snow, who had previously been in a state of unconsciousness, her eyebrows trembled, and then she opened her eyes.

“Snow.” Yichuan, shocked and overjoyed, hurriedly went forward while at the same time looking at Shaman Cao. “How is my wife?”

“Please forgive me for my inability.” Shaman Cao shook his head. “Commander, you’d best go invite the clan leader.”

“The clan leader?” Yichuan’s heart clenched.

The clan leader was the clan leader for the entire Five Prefectures of the Ji clan. His name was Ji Ninefire. An old fellow who had lived for nearly four hundred years, a true ancestor of the Ji clan. Of course, he was also a Zifu Disciple! Ji Ninefire loved to research, and had significant accomplishments in both formations, medicines, and poisons. In terms of medical treatment, he was naturally incomparably superior to Shaman Cao.

“I’ll immediately take Snow over to him.” Yichuan said hurriedly.

“No.” Shaman Cao said hurriedly. “Commander, you cannot be rash. The Madame currently can’t withstand any shaking or bumping. She needs to quietly recuperate. If you can invite the clan leader to come, that would be for the best.” Shaman Cao came to a halt. He knew that inviting the clan leader to come would be very difficult.

Yichuan nodded, then immediately instructed a nearby maidservant, “Immediately go invite Commander Ji Redflower over.”

Moments later.

Redflower, dressed in red clothing, walked in. “Yichuan, what do you need me for?”

“Aunty Flower.” Yichuan, upon seeing this person, hurriedly said, “I want to ask you to ride on your Azure Firebird and immediately head to the Central Prefecture. Invite the clan leader to pay a visit to our Western Prefecture.”

“Invite the clan leader?” Redflower was startled. The clan leader had stopped managing the clan’s affairs long ago, and spent all of his time in research and training…even if Ji Young, the Prefecture Lord of the Western Prefecture went to invite him, the clan leader still probably wouldn’t come. “If I go invite him, would he come?”

Yichuan said hurriedly, “Just tell him that I, Ji Yichuan, have a life-and-death matter and that I am asking the clan leader to come to the Western Prefecture City. The clan leader will definitely come.”

Although Redflower was still puzzled at why Yichuan was so confident that the clan leader would definitely come, she still nodded. “Fine. I’ll go make a visit to the ‘City of Ten Thousand Swords’.”

The Grand Xia Dynasty had erected countless commandery cities throughout the world. The Ji clan was only in control of a single one, the ‘City of Ten Thousand Swords’. This was the ‘Central Prefecture’ of

the Five Prefectures of the Ji clan! As for the Eastern Prefecture, Western Prefecture, Southern Prefecture, and Northern Prefecture, they had all been built by the Ji clan, and had nothing special about them.

“Sorry to trouble you.” Yichuan said in thanks.

Redflower immediately left, then quickly mounted her Azure Firebird and left the Western Prefecture City, heading towards the City of Ten Thousand Swords!

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The maidservants in the room had left as well, leaving behind only Yichuan and his wife, Snow.

“Yichuan.” Snow smiled, lifting her head up to look at her man.

“Snow.” Yichuan sat by the side of the bed, holding his wife’s hand.

Snow shook her head gently. “I know it. You know it too. When we returned from the Darknorth Sea and suffered that attack on the way back, we were very lucky to be able to survive and return. The past ten years have been very calm and very happy. I am already content.”

“If, if that year, you hadn’t given birth to Ning…” Yichuan’s voice was somewhat hoarse.

Snow gently shook her head. “This is our child. I had to give birth to him. Even though using the secret technique resulted in me losing some years of my life, it was worth it! I had been heavily injured. If I hadn’t given birth to Ning then, who knows if I would have been able to give birth later on. Ning has the blood of both of us in his veins. And what’s more, his life was bought using the life of my elder brother.”

“Elder brother.” Yichuan still remembered that great battle they had fought on the way back.

That great battle had changed the fate of three people.

The Yuchi siblings, and himself, Ji Yichuan.

“Quick, take my little sister and go! Quick, go!”

The image of that tall, powerful back. That furious roar. Yichuan had never forgotten it.

“If we gave up Ning, perhaps I would have been able to live for a few more years, but I wouldn’t have been able to have a child with you. I would have regretted it my entire life. He has the bloodline of the Ji clan, and he also has the bloodline of my Yuchi clan.” Yuchi Snow said gently, “I’ve had ten years by your side, and I also have an incomparably clever son…I am incomparably happy and incomparably satisfied. These past ten years, I have felt very blessed and very happy.”

Yichuan gently held his wife’s hand.

“Ning is my pride and joy.” Snow said slowly. “I don’t regret giving birth to Ning.”

“Right.” Yichuan nodded gently. “I understand. Understand. In less than two hours, the clan leader will be here. Let the clan leader take a look. Perhaps it isn’t too terrible.”

Snow nodded. “If I can live for another year or two, let’s not tell Ning about this for now. If I won’t be able to live for much longer, then let Ning return.” And then, Snow looked towards her man, her eyes shining. “Yichuan, I am so blessed to have had you and Ning.”

“Alright.” Yichuan looked at his wife and said gently, “I feel the same way.”

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But neither Yichuan nor Snow knew that right now, their son Ning was in dire straits. He was in the great mountain between the

borders of the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan, which from afar seemed ordinary and unremarkable. Upon entering this mountain, however, one would fall into a pit of endless dark fog and never come out again.

The protective lotus petals swiveled around him. Ning sat there in the lotus position, currently focusing on the [Nine Scrolls on Formations], constantly hypothesizing and thinking about how to break this formation as soon as possible.

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At the midpoint of the mountain.

One miserable scream after another emanated from places throughout the midway point of the mountain. All sorts of furious, hateful curses, wild pleas, and sobs all constantly assaulted the ears, while in the center of the mountain, there were multiple pillars with men and women bound to them. At a glance, one could see over a hundred men and women, their bodies covered in scars.

Beaten, humiliated, tormented…all sorts of cruel methods had been used on them.

“Xiantian lifeforms? You still think you are Xiantian lifeforms? Hahaha, drink it all, drink some of this wonderful urine to quench your thirst!” The muscular servants were wildly tormenting them.

Standing in the center of the mountain, there were six beautiful dressed men and women. They calmly watched all of this.

“We’ve purchased more than a million ordinary slaves in this Swallow Mountain region, and seized nearly a hundred Xiantian lifeforms. However, we are still quite a ways off from the requirements of Master.” A black-clothed woman who had a scorpion on her shoulders said slowly.

“Senior apprentice-brother is currently outside capturing Xiantian lifeforms. We’ll quickly be at the necessary numbers.” A handsome

youth smiled. “However, one of Master’s spirit-beasts, Blackneedle, went to kill an enemy within the formation, but was instead killed. My fellow apprentice-brothers and apprentice-sisters, how do you think we should deal with this?”

“Younger apprentice-brother, you are naturally talented. It’s best if you go.”

“Younger apprentice-brother…”

The nearby men and women all looked at the handsome youth. Seeing the situation, his face darkened. None of these fellow martial apprentices were fools. Although all of them has extraordinary abilities, since they knew that the person within the formation could easily kill the spirit-beast ‘Blackneedle’, none of them were willing to go. After all, going meant encountering some risk.

Suddenly…

Kakaka…

From within the mountain, a location began to turn and swivel. One metal plate after another began to move open, revealing a corridor. Within the dark corridor, there was a hint of green light, and an icy cold aura swept out from within.

“Master.” The six men and women all called out respectfully in unison.

Chapter 15 – Wraith

From the dark abyss below came a sharp yet calm voice. “Little Seven, you are the most clever. You can go handle this matter. Get rid of this intruder.”

“Yes, revered Master.” The handsome youth didn’t hesitate at all as he replied with respect.

“Go, then.”

Just as the words ended…

Kakaka…..

The metal board immediately rose up from the floor, once more tightly sealing away that corridor. Only now did those six men and women let out sighs of relief. Although they were their master’s closest disciples, whenever they faced their master, they still felt terrified. This was because those disciples who had dared to offend their master had all been tortured to death, and would never even have the chance to be reborn.

“Who knows what sort of magic treasure Master is currently refining.” A violet-clothed young man said softly. “All together, from start to finish, including the people we tortured to death in other places, we’ve killed hundreds of Xiantian lifeforms, and an uncountable number of ordinary people. Master even said that once he finishes with this magic treasure, even if he encounters a Wanxiang Adept, he won’t be afraid. Who knows what sort of magic treasure this is?”

“It definitely is a terrifyingly powerful one.”

“Right now, Master’s magic treasure is only half completed, but he already pays no attention to those Zifu Disciples located in the tribes of Swallow Mountain. When he truly completes is…” The six men and women chatted softly. They were very curious about this mysterious

magic treasure which their master was busy creating, but unfortunately, their master had remained deep within his study this entire time and had forbidden anyone from entering.

As for that tunnel, as soon as it shut, not a single sound would come from outside.

“Whoosh!”

A blurry, savage ghost suddenly came out from the body of one of the Xiantian lifeforms bound to the pillar. It let out a soundless scream, and then that blurry ghost sank down into the stones, being gathered to the depths of the mountain, towards that hidden room. This scene caused those six men and women to feel nervous. Only a true dread wraith would be visible to the naked eye.

“Yet another wraith!”

The six men and women thought back to their second apprentice-brother, who had offended their master. He had been tortured to death, and then he had been transformed into a dread wraith, then been absorbed in. Even wraiths were being drawn down…clearly, whoever died there would never have the chance for rebirth.

“Little Seven, go deal with the enemy in the formation.” His fellow apprentices exhorted.

“Stop rushing me.” The handsome youth immediately walked outside.

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The dark fog was everywhere. The handsome youth quietly moved forwards, and everywhere he went, that black fog automatically opened a pathway for him.

A Dao-seal appeared out of nowhere in the handsome youth’s left hand. On the surface of the Dao-seal, there was a blood vessel like pattern of strange characters. On his right hand, a horsetail whisk

appeared.

“Let’s go.” With a flip of the horsetail whisk, hundreds of white strands of light immediately transformed to a size of dozens of meters, swirling around towards the lotus-position seated Ji Ning.

Ji Ning was seated in the lotus position. Suddenly, he sensed something, and he raised his head to look.

The entire area around him was filled with those white strands.

“Break.” Ning barked softly, and the Waterflame Lotus that had been swiveling around him instantly increased greatly in size. The two enormous layers of lotus petals swiveled, and those invading white strands that had sought to entangle him were all snapped, completely unable to draw near Ning.

“Controlling fire and water?” The pupils of the distant, handsome youth immediately contracted. “It seems he is a Fiendgod Body Refiner at the Xiantian level. This will be troublesome. I had wanted to rely on my horsetail whisk to directly seize him, but it seems that won’t be possible.” The hundreds of white strands quickly returned, then disappeared. In his right hand, a long whip appeared.

“You’ve invaded our formation. Immediately report your name!” The handsome youth shouted.

Ning was already on his feet, and he glanced at the handsome youth. “This is the border between the Ironwood clan and the Ji clan, but you seem to neither be of the Ji clan nor of the Ironwood clan. Who are you, exactly?”

“If I told you, you’d be frightened to death.” The handsome youth sneered.

“Why don’t you give it a try and see if I’ll be frightened to death.” Ning wielded a sword in each hand.

“The only thing you need to see is my whip.” The handsome youth

didn't continue the conversation. Clearly, he didn't want to explain where he was from. He immediately struck out with his whip, and the black whip slashed through the air, elongating at high speed. By the time it reached Ning, the whip had already transformed into a black serpent head which bit straight at Ning.

Ning just looked at it. As soon as the long black whip broke through the first layer of the fire lotus, it was blocked by the second later of the water lotus.

"What sort of technique is that lotus of fire and water?" The handsome youth wasn't like that spirit-beast from earlier; he could immediately tell that Ning was a Fiendgod Body Refiner who could control fire and water, but he didn't understand how Ning's technique worked.

Swoosh!

Ning, who had previously been just calmly looking at the whip, suddenly without any warning began to use the Windwing Evasion technique. He instantly leapt over towards that handsome youth at an astonishing speed. At the same instant he leapt forward like a gust of smoke, the Darknorth swords in his hands executed Raindrop Pierces Rocks, stabbing straight towards the head of the handsome youth.

"Hard to deal with. Flee!" This entire time, the handsome youth had been clutching that Dao-seal in his left hand. He suddenly activated it and it transformed into a blurry shadow and entered his body… and then the handsome youth suddenly disappeared into thin air.

Swoosh. Ning appeared in front of where that handsome youth had been. He began to frown. "An escape technique? He should have relied on that Dao-seal to use this technique. A Xiantian Ki Refiner actually has an escape-type Dao-seal. The Zifu Disciple behind him definitely dotes on him."

Dao-seals were divided by class as well.

The Divine Speed Seal, Light Body Seal, Diamond Seal, Giant Strength Seal, and other Dao-seals were all the lowest class seals, which escape seals were clearly on a higher level. For example, the 'Traceless Talisman' was a type of Dao-seal that was so precious you couldn't even buy it with money. Only, unfortunately, he wasn't carrying the 'Traceless Talisman' on him. Even if he was, because Ning was trapped within this formation, he was unable to tell which direction he was in, there was no way that Ning could use it to go directly into the insides of the mountain. Of course, he could still rely on the Traceless Talisman to immediately flee, but unfortunately, he didn't have it on him.

"Although I have Escape Seals on me, this trapping formation has activated the five elements. I'm completely unable to 'escape'." Ning was certain about this. He had pondered for a long time, and he could be considered to have a good level of attainment in formations.

He had some understanding regarding the formation he was trapped in as well.

When the five elements were activated, there was no way to 'escape', unless the master of the formation voluntarily helped out. Unfortunately, the master of this formation only wanted his death. How could he help out?

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The handsome youth quickly charged back to the midway point of the mountain.

"Little Seven's back."

"Younger apprentice brother, have you executed the enemy?"

"With our younger apprentice brother having personally intervened, he definitely captured the trespasser with ease." Those fellow apprentices, seeing the look on the handsome youth's face,

immediately knew that he had definitely failed, so they immediately began to ridicule him.

The handsome youth barked back, “Fellow apprentices, you have no idea as to how powerful this enemy is. If I had just been a bit slower in fleeing, I probably would have lost my life to him.”

“He’s that formidable?”

“Does he have some sort of powerful magic treasure?” The other five men and women were all astonished. They knew how powerful this younger apprentice-brother of theirs was.

The handsome youth said hurriedly, “He is just like our senior apprentice-brother. He trains in both ki and Body! He is a Xiantian level practitioner as a Fiendgod Refiner as well, and he was able to reach me in an instant. Fortunately, I had been holding the Escape Seal from the very beginning, and so I was lucky enough to escape. His speed alone indicates that he is probably a peak Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiner.”

“Ah?”

“A peak Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner?”

“Where did such a powerful figure suddenly come from?” The other five fellow apprentices were all shocked.

The handsome youth sighed, “It seems we’ll have to wait for our senior apprentice-brother. Senior apprentice-brother has already reached the peak Xiantian level in both ki and Body, and he also has all sorts of magic treasures and poisons…the large majority of the hundred Xiantian lifeforms we have caught in the Swallow Mountain area were all captured by senior apprentice-brother.”

“Who is speaking about me?” A low voice rang out.

The six men and women hurriedly turned to look. At the halfway point of the mountain, near that enormous cave entrance, a man

dressed in a black cloak with unbound hair walked in. That icy, sinister aura was just the same as their revered master's. The man was currently carrying a large sack. As he walked into the mountain estate, he tossed the bag to the floor. At the opening of the bag, some feet could be seen.

"Senior apprentice-brother." The six men and women immediately called out respectfully. They all knew exactly how formidable their senior apprentice-brother was. They had all fled secretly with their master, and on the way, their senior apprentice-brother had even battled once against a Zifu Disciple and lived to tell the tale.

"I went to the Kou clan's territory and seized these three Xiantian lifeforms. I've already destroyed their dantian's. Go tie them up." The black cloaked man instructed.

Immediately, servants charged forward and dragged out the three people in the sack. One woman, two men. The woman was incomparably charming, but in a dazed state.

"So even the bewitching beauty, 'Kou Hua', was captured."

"Three more."

"All of the Kou clan."

The captured Ji clan, Ironwood clan, and Riverbank clan Xiantian level members of the Swallow Mountain region all glanced over. Immediately, the black-cloaked man's face turned savage, and his eyes emanated a green light. "I ordered you to torment them, torment them until they go insane, torment them until they died. But look at them; they actually have the presence of mind to look at these three. If you aren't able to torment to death, if a single one of them doesn't become a dread wraith, then I will make sure all of you become dread wraiths!"

"Yesyesyes." Those servants were absolutely terrified, and then all of them threw themselves forward, using all methods at their disposal

to torment these Xiantian lifeforms with destroyed dantians.

Seeing their senior apprentice-brother angry, the other six men and women were all frightened as well.

The black-robed man turned his head to look at his fellow apprentices. “Just now, you were speaking of me?”

Chapter 16 – Clansmen

“Senior apprentice-brother, within the formation with our revered master set up, an enemy who secretly entered has been trapped. He looks just like a youth.” That handsome youth addressed as ‘Little Seven’ immediately said. “But his power is astonishingly great. Even one of Master’s spirit-beasts, ‘Blackneedle’, was killed, and I almost lost my life as well.”

The black-clothed man frowned. “Oh? He’s that powerful?”

“Very powerful. That enemy is also both a Ki Refiner and a Body Refiner. He should be a peak Xiantian expert. Only you, senior apprentice-brother, will be able to kill him.”

“Once senior apprentice-brother uses his ‘Intoxicating Dragonspit’ technique, no matter how powerful he is, he will definitely faint and be easily captured.”

All of them were boasting and praising him.

The black-clothed man looked at the fellow disciples. “Just a single intruder causes all of you to feel helpless! Hmph, Master is currently busy forging his magic treasure and cannot spare any attention. Since the six of you aren’t able to do anything else competently, then you can go personally torment those Xiantian lifeforms. At least you’ll be helping Master with his magic treasure.”

“Yes, senior apprentice-brother.” The six men and women all responded in unison, and then all of them picked up the various tools on the floor and began to walk towards those Xiantian lifeforms.

Those bound Xiantian lifeforms who had their dantians destroyed were virtually all from the Swallow Mountain region. As for the other Xiantian lifeforms, they were extremely rare, because most had been tortured to death long ago. Even the few dozen who didn’t die yet were at the verge of death.

“Both a ki and a Body Refiner? Peak Xiantian? Let’s take a look.” The black-clothed man snorted, then walked out.

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“The Three Powers [Heaven, Earth, Man] as the foundation.” Ji Ning, surrounded and protected by his Waterflame Lotus, was seated in the lotus position, quietly chanting while looking at the formation around himself. “The Five Elements, with water and earth making up the majority…the variables lie in these areas.”

In his mind, a model of this enormous formation naturally came into being. He was currently thoroughly investigating the secrets of this formation.

Ning suddenly rose to his feet.

Swoosh! Swoosh! Swoosh!

Instantly, he transformed into blur and repeatedly changed directions several times. The faster he moved, the greater the amount of pressure he would place on the formation, giving him a chance to test where the strengths and weaknesses of the formation lay.

“It is even more profound and intricate than the formation I just envisioned.” Ning shook his head. “If I had a chance to see the formation flags or formation marks, I would quickly understand the secrets of this formation.” He knew that this was a formation controlled by a Zifu Disciple. Perhaps because the Zifu Disciple, for some special reasons, was busy, he had been unable to come and deal with Ning personally.

But Ning knew that this was just a temporary situation. Once the Zifu Disciple attacked, given how powerful a Zifu Disciple naturally was, given that Ning was trapped within this confusing formation, he would definitely die.

“I must break this formation.”

Time was of the essence. Under this invisible pressure, Ning wholeheartedly was analyzing this formation, and his understanding of formations was constantly increasing. Fortunately, his previous life had given him a good foundation, while in this life, his soul was incredibly powerful, and he also had the guide to formations left behind by that Loose Immortal. Only because he had these three aspects combined did he have such an astonishing rate of improvement. However, to break this formation by this Zifu Disciple… he was still quite a ways off.

The great formation of this Zifu Disciple, if one wanted to destroy it through strength, would have to use tremendous force! Power at the same level naturally wouldn't be enough. Perhaps even a Wanxiang Adept would find it difficult to destroy it forcibly. As for Ning, without question, he had to defeat the formation through understanding its secrets. Only then would he be able to easily defeat it. Break through it by raw force? He was far from being able to.

"Wu!" The black fog in front of him seemed to grow slightly dimmer. A dark figure could faintly be seen in the distance, which was currently looking at Ning, seated in the lotus position, with curiosity. "Control over water and fire? That protective lotus seems to be rather extraordinary."

Pu!

The black-clothed man was currently holding a bottle in his hand. He pulled the stopper out, and the bottle began to release gusts of a mind-intoxicating scent. This bottle contained within it 'Intoxicating Dragonspit'. If one directly drank this thing, perhaps even a Wanxiang Adept would immediately faint. But of course, it would be quite hard to get a Wanxiang Adept to drink it. After all, as soon as he smelled it, he would know not to drink it.

The scent of Intoxicating Dragonspit alone, when smelled, was enough to cause virtually all Xiantian lifeforms to faint and collapse. As the senior apprentice, he had been bestowed this Intoxicating Dragonspit by his revered master, which was why he was able to

stealthily capture so many Xiantian lifeforms.

“Fall, fall, fall!” The black-clothed figure looked expectantly at Ning.

“Hm?”

The lotus-position seated Ning felt a fragrance assault his nostrils. Immediately, his body went soft and his head grew dizzy. However, by relying on the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens] and the Fiendgod body it had given him, which was incomparably stronger than that of normal Fiendgods, although Ning felt slightly dizzy, the divine power in his body, when activated, quickly blocked this feeling.

“Which scoundrel is using tricks from hiding!” Ning hurriedly stood up and shouted loudly!

“Hahaha. You are indeed a Xiantian-level Fiendgod, and thus very hard to make faint.” The distant black-clothed man walked over. “A Xiantian-level Fiendgod Body Refiner whose body is akin to a Fiendgod’s. To make you faint is as hard as making a Zifu-level Ki Refiner faint. This is why all of the people I have been capturing in Swallow Mountain have been Xiantian Ki Refiners.”

“Xiantian Ki Refiners, upon smelling this, will immediately collapse. After destroying their dantian, they won’t be able to resist at all. Fiendgod practitioners, however, will be able to regrow their dantian after it is destroyed. They are quite hard to control. In addition, torturing a Xiantian Body Refiner to death is too hard.” The black-clothed man mumbled to himself.

Ning stared at the distant, black-clothed figure. His swords were in his hands, and he was incomparably cautious, because the distant man, when walking over, gave off an invisible pressure…the tyrannical aura which only a Xiantian Fiendgod gave off. Clearly, the man had already activated the divine power in his body. Once his power was fully activated, he would attack.

“You said you captured Xiantian lifeforms?” Ning stared at him.

The black-clothed man didn’t answer the question. A look on his face that seemed like a smile and yet wasn’t, he said to Ning, “If my guess is correct, you should be young master ‘Ji Ning’ of the Ji clan.”

“Eh?” Ji Ning was startled.

In this era, communication was only possible through shouting to others, while distant communication was through running between tribes. Thus, only the high level members of some tribes knew of Ji Ning’s name. Even if they knew his name, however, they wouldn’t be able to recognize him…

“It seems I didn’t guess wrongly.” The black-clothed man sighed. “In the entire Swallow Mountain area, there can only be one person who is so young in appearance, and yet is a Xiantian lifeform who is even capable of making my fellow apprentices think he is a peak Xiantian expert. The only person capable of this must be the one who kicked down the city walls with three kicks and sent River Sansi flying with one kick. Young master Ji Ning.”

“You know quite a lot.” Ning looked at him.

The black-clothed man sighed. “Of course. I have to. In accordance with the orders from my master, I had to go capture a large number of Xiantian lifeforms throughout the Swallow Mountain region. Naturally, I need a good understanding of the intelligence reports regarding the various Xiantian experts of the Swallow Mountain area. If I didn’t prepare in advance and ended up accidentally ‘kicking an iron board’, I would be in trouble! For example, your father, Ji Yichuan…he had become a peak Xiantian long ago, and I even suspect that he is already a Zifu Disciple. I definitely wouldn’t go capture a person like him.”

“Only after getting a good understanding of a person would I go capture him. That is why so many Xiantian lifeforms went missing in the Swallow Mountain area, and yet no one knows who did it.” The

black-clothed man looked at Ning. “So young, and yet so astonishingly strong. In the entire Swallow Mountain area, only you fit the criteria. In addition, this is the territory of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture, and you yourself are of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.”

Ning was stunned.

Many Xiantian lifeforms had gone missing in the Swallow Mountain area? Why was it that he hadn’t heard of this?

Actually, this was something which had only recently occurred. The capture of Xiantian lifeforms had to be done quickly. By the time the disappearance was noticed, perhaps days would have passed, and it also took time for the entire tribe to make a decision on what to do. Thus, he had to frantically seize the opportunity to capture as many as he could. He couldn’t capture them slowly. Once the major powers of the various forces of Swallow Mountain reacted and began to set traps, it would be dangerous.

“Nearly a hundred Xiantian experts have ‘gone missing’ in Swallow Mountain.” The black-robed man looked at Ning. “Because this place is near the Ji clan, many of the Ji clan have gone missing, twenty four in total. There are some who directly belong to your Ji clan, while others belong to the tribes of your Ji clan. The Ji clan controls so much territory that I imagine up till now, your Ji clan still hasn’t gotten a full picture of how many Xiantian lifeforms have gone missing.”

Ning was astonished.

The Ji clan…had actually…had actually lost many Xiantian lifeforms?

“Some have gone ‘missing’ from your Ji clan of the West Prefecture as well. Let me report a few names. I imagine you recognize them.” The black-clothed man said. “Ji Jadewich. Ji Shan. Poortile. Earthshaker. Blindfish. These five all directly belong to your Ji clan of the West Prefecture. You should know them, right?”

“Ah!”

Ning’s face instantly turned white.

Ji Jadewich…that was the son of Ji Lee, his most talented son. In the past, during the fierce struggle between Ji Lee’s lienage and the current line in control of the Prefecture Lord position, Jadewich had been one of the most fiercest in the struggle. Ning had once deeply disliked this man.

Ji Shan was a Xiantian lifeform of a younger generation of the Ji clan. Although he wasn’t a Commander, the Ji clan of the West Prefecture had very great expectations for him. After all, his surname was ‘Ji’, and he also belonged to the primary line of descent.

Poortile was a newly promoted Xiantian lifeform which had been trained and recruited by the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. In Western Prefecture City, Ning had seen him quite a few times. Each time when Poortile saw him, he would bow slightly and call out, “Young master Ji Ning!”

Earthshaker was one of the twelve Commanders of the Ji clan!

Blindfish…Blindfish….Blindfish!!!

“Master Blindfish!” Ning’s heart was trembling.

Master Blindfish had taught him archery. To Ning, he was the closest, most familiar figure of the five.

All of them were familiar figures. After all, ever since he was young, he had grown up in Western Prefecture City. He had met with all of the Xiantian lifeforms of Western Prefecture City. Each year, at the gathering at Snowfall Palace, he would see this group of people. He was very familiar with them all. These people were his clansmen! Some of them had grudges against him, some of them were of the same lineage as him, while some were friends of him. One of them as the master archer who had taught him archery!

“You…” Ning’s face turned pale.

“You know them all, right? Haha.” The black-clothed man suddenly shouted loudly, “Ji Jadewich, Ji Shan, Poortile, Earthshaker, Blindfish, your young master Ji Ning of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture is within the formation. Your young master Ji Ning will soon accompany you! Hahaha…”

The voice was very loud, and it transmitted directly into the distant tunnel midway up the mountain.

Chapter 17 – A Frenzied Battle

Within the mountain.

Blindfish's body was covered with blood, and he was currently tied to that pillar. Ever since the day he had arrived in this hellish place, he had lost all hope. Currently, he was currently grinding his teeth, enduring the pain while taunting them, "Is that all you got? Harder, hit me harder. Come at me, boy. Didn't you drink enough milk when you were a lad?"

Suddenly…

"Your young master Ji Ning will soon be coming to keep you company! Hahaha…" That laughter rang towards them.

"Ji Ning!" The bearded Blindfish's body trembled, and then he roared hoarsely with all his might, "Young master Ji Ning, hurry and flee! There is an Immortal practitioner here developing an evil magic treasure!"

Ji Jadewich, also bound by Blindfish's side, had been holding his head down, exhausted, but now his spirit was roused, and he raised his head as well. He murmured: "Ji Ning? Ji Ning?"

"Ji Ning! Quick, flee! Quick, leave!" Jadewich howled desolately as well, striving to make himself heard.

In the past, although he had wanted for his father's lineage to take over the Prefecture Lord position, since they had lost, he had submitted whole-heartedly. Ji Ning was their Ji clan of the West Prefecture's next Prefecture Lord! He had personally seen Ning's talent, and knew that the Ji clan of the West Prefecture would definitely become even more powerful because of Ji Ning. His dantian had already been destroyed and he had been captured. He didn't want the most promising genius of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture, the next Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture, to die here as well. This was a humiliation to the Ji clan!

“Quick, flee!” Jadewiched howled heroically.

“Young master Ji Ning, quick, leave!” Ji Shan howled as well.

They had all been caught here, and had often seen those dread wraiths enter that underground tunnel. From that, as well as the discourse of those six handsome men and women, they had learned…that this was utterly a devil’s lair!

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The black fog around him billowed, but from afar came furious, frantic howls.

“Young master Ji Ning, hurry up and flee! There is an Immortal practitioner here developing an evil magic treasure!”

“Young master Ji Ning, hurry and leave.”

“Flee.”

Although they had been tortured to the point of their voices turning hoarse, because he was so familiar with these people, Ning could tell who they were.

“Devleoping an evil magic treasure?” Ning forcibly swallowed down the fiery anger in his heart as he stared at the black-clothed man.

The black-clothed man chortled strangely. “The genius of the Ji clan, the mighty young master Ji Ning…don’t be so impatient, don’t be so angry. They will all die. As for you, you’ll die too.” He wanted to arouse Ning’s fury. When a person was enraged, they would lose their calm, and after doing so, their chances of victory would decrease.

“Go die!” Ning was like a tiger leaving the mounting, releasing a surge of seemingly unblockable power as he charged straight forward.

“Hmph, so rash. And they say you are a genius? In the end, you are still too young.” The black-clothed man said to himself. In his hands, he wielded black weaver’s shuttles in each hand, whirling them like devils as he welcomed the charging Ning. The two black shuttles stabbed towards Ning, and as the two drew near…

Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish! Swish!

The two black shuttles actually shot out multiple black needles in a cluster towards Ning. Because they were too close, and the attack of the black needles was simply too fast, although Ning’s swordplay was powerful, he found it hard to block them all. Luckily, Ning’s body had those two layers of the Waterflame Lotus to block those black needles. The black needles just barely managed to break through the first layer before collapsing, and as they did, the earth immediately began to emit a hissing sound.

“All stained with poison.” The two Darknorth swords in Ning’s hands stabbed angrily outwards towards the black-clothed man.

The black-clothed man moved like a ghost, the two black shuttles in his hands just barely able to dodge while also shooting out those black needles.

“What a formidable Ji Ning.” The black-clothed man was secretly shocked. “His protective lotus flower is too powerful. It’s actually able to affect even my own movements. Luckily, my robes are actually formed from an armor-type magic treasure, as otherwise, the power of the protective lotus alone would have torn my clothes apart.”

“Bang!”

A sword shadow suddenly pierced through the black-clothed man’s arm, and the black-clothed man immediately leapt backwards at high speed, his face gradually turning savage. “What a marvelous, profound protective lotus you have. My Blackblood Needles are unable to break through it. It seems I’ll have to use power to break it.” The two black shuttles in his hands disappeared, and then in his

hands appeared a long staff formed from six shuttles, while at the same time, the area around the body of the man began to faintly swirl with fire as a powerful aura began to emanate outwards.

“Staff?” Ning was secretly startled.

Earlier, when they had battled, he had noticed that this black-clothed man’s ability in wielding those black shuttles was truly quite weak. Only, the sudden shooting out of those Blackblood Needles was rather sinister. Now that the opponent was using a staff, Ning finally understood…that this was the weapon which the opponent was actually an expert in.

“A staff is a long weapon and a heavy weapon.” Ning mused. “Fiendgod Body Refiners generally like to use heavy weapon type magic treasures, using power to break through magic.”

“Receive my attacks.” The black-clothed man transformed into a black blur, and the longstaff was lifted up high and instantly began to increase in size rapidly, while its weight rapidly increased as well. The staff itself most likely now weighed tens of thousands of kilograms, and it smashed down directly towards Ning’s head!

Ning’s Darknorth swords swept upwards.

Clang!

An enormous clashing sound. Ning himself was sent flying backwards, creating a deep gouge in the earth. His two hands had cracked apart at the thumb, and blood had already dyed the sword handles red.

“What tremendous power, even greater than mine by far. Although I am merely at the fourth level of the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens], I’m still comparable to most late-stage Fiendgod Body Refiners. This black-clothed man is actually even stronger than me. He must be a peak Fiendgod Body Refiner.” Ning understood that he had encountered a true opponent this time.

To kill an Fiendgod Body Refiner at the Xiantian level was a much harder proposition.

“I want to see how many staff blows of mine you can take.” The eyes of the black-clothed man flashed with a faint green light. He charged forwards with large steps, emanating an aura as mighty as a dragon’s, and as he drew near Ning, he delivered the longstaff in his hands in a forward blow. A direct attack!

“Staves focus on power! Swords focus on skill!” Ning shouted, while at the same time, a pair of green wings appeared behind him, seemingly made out of steel. This was the wing-type magic treasure which Ning had acquired out of the thousands of magic treasures found in the Aquatic Manor.

The [Shadewind Steps] was nothing more than one of the most basic foundations to the divine ability, [Windwing Evasion]. When using this set of wings to utilize this divine ability, the power was much greater, comparable to a tiger being given a set of wings.

Hua!

Ning’s wings trembled, and instantly, like a giant Roc, his speed tremendously, bizarrely increased. He flashed past like a gust of wind, constantly changing direction as the Darknorth swords in his hands struck out once and again against the black-clothed man.

“Yayayaya!” The black-clothed man was completely in a state of frenzy. His ki had activated the runes scribed onto his longstaff, causing the power of the Weight Seal to continue to grow. The staff seemed to have transformed into a small mount. Luckily, he was a peak Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner, as otherwise he wouldn’t even be able to budge such a heavy weapon.

“If you can’t hit someone with the staff, so what if it is heavy? Die!” Ning seemed to have been possessed as well. The existence of that Zifu Disciple was a source of invisible pressure for him. Those tormented clansmen of the Ji clan caused Ning’s heart to feel as

though it was being scorched.

“Kill! Kill! Kill!”

Ji Ning, relying on his wing-type magic treasures, moved like a ghost, his speed even greater than the black-clothed figure’s. The Darknorth swords in his hands, having already undergone a Bloodforging, were incomparably sharp. His swordplay which contained the ‘True Meaning of the Dao’, in terms of technique, was at a level higher than the black-clothed man’s as well.

“Bang!” A large hole was blasted through the waist by a piercing blow, but then immediately afterwards, the hole immediately grew small, then disappeared, having completely healed.

“Hua!” A large wound was carved out on his back.

“Chi.” His face was cut and scarred.

“Yayaya!!!” The black-clothed man was being driven insane by this battle. His all but unkillable body, when paired with his ‘one with the world’ level of staff-play, allowed him to easily dominate most peak Xiantian Ki Refiners. He hadn’t expected that this time, he had run into a wall. The opponent’s strength was a good deal weaker than his, but the opponent was nonetheless an expert Fiendgod Body Refiner whose swordplay was clearly on a higher level!

Swish!

Ning was sent flying away by a grazing blow of the staff. Although the skin on his hands were ripped open from the shock of the collision, they instantly healed. After all, as his swordplay was extremely skilled, Ning would only occasionally suffer a bit, while the opponent was truly dancing on the fine line between life and death. If he was to be stabbed by Ning in the head, a fatal blow, then he would die for sure.

“Bang!” Using both swords at the same time and moving like a ghost, the dance at the precipice of life and death finally came to a

stumbling halt.

Bang!

The black-clothed man's waist had a sword light flash past it, and an enormous wound appeared. He fell to the ground, his body chopped in half.

"Formidable, formidable." The black-clothed man ground his teeth. "However, you can go die now."

Hua.

Just as Ning's wings fluttered and he pounced towards the black-clothed man with his two swords, a bottle appeared in one of the hands of the black-robed man. He suddenly smashed it into the ground, which immediately exploded open against the rocky floor of the mountain. A thick white fog instantly poured out. Ning, seeing the situation looked bad, hurriedly retreated at high speed, but the faint fragrance still assaulted his nostrils. Although he had already stopped his breathing early on, that odor still invaded and burrowed through his body.

"Transform into a pool of liquid!" The black-clothed man gritted his teeth as he stared at Ning, the two halves of his body quickly drawing close together and beginning to fuse together.

Chapter 18 – A Heroic, Frenzied Shout

The white mist within the bottle was an essence removed from corpses and transformed into gaseous form. Once it touched the body, it would quickly invade and corrode the body, melting it into a puddle of liquid! Even this peak Xiantian 'senior apprentice' himself had to use an antidote against it. The youth in front of him was clearly weaker than him in strength, and based on his understanding, young master Ji Ning had only recently broken through to the Xiantian level.

"No matter how monstrous of a genius you are, as a Fiendgod Body Refiner, you are far inferior to me. Even I am not able to withstand it. You will definitely die." The black-clothed man looked expectantly.

Ning's face changed. It really was a case of a certain type of master producing a certain type of disciple! In the past, Ning had calculated that this Zifu Disciple must be an expert poison user, and this black-clothed fellow in front of him was also skilled in poisons.

The white corrosive fog…Ning felt numbness begin to spread and erode his entire body.

"Gotta hold!" Ning circulated the Shining Scarlet divine power in his body, and the powerful Fiendgod life energy also began to wipe away the poison.

"Die!" While forcibly suppressing this corpse essence in his body, the wing-type magic treasure on his back suddenly howled as Ning pounced towards the black-clothed man on the floor. Regardless of whether or not he was able to disperse this corpse essence in his body, he had to first kill the man in front of him. Otherwise, if he were to be dead from poison while the other was still alive, how hateful a thought would that be!

"Hahaha, the more you move, the faster you die." The black-clothed man wielded the six shuttle longstaff, his footsteps thundering on

the ground and causing the earth to shake. Clearly, he was using all of his strength! “Go die!” He raised the six shuttle longstaff high, smashing it down towards Ning like a giant mountain.

Shua! Shua! Relying on the Windwing Evasion, Ning moved like a ghost, moving in an arc to attack the black-clothed man from the side.

“Kill! Kill! Kill!” Ning wildly pounced forward, while the longstaff in the black-clothed man changed directly slightly to welcome Ning. The two had already exchanged blows multiple times and knew very well how powerful the enemy was. The black-clothed man was physically strong, while Ning’s swordplay was marvelous, and he was an expert in twin swords.

Dong!

A nearby piece of head-sized rock suddenly flew up, moving at supersonic speed as it smashed towards the black-clothed man’s head. The distance was too close, and the stone came flying from behind…the black-clothed man didn’t have eyes in his back. By the time he vaguely sensed the ripples in the air caused by the stone, it was too late!

“Bang!” The stone, wrapped up by Ning’s divine will, was moving at an incredible speed. It was as though a late-stage Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner expert had viciously thrown it at full force against his head.

The stone shattered into tiny pieces.

Blood flowed from the black-clothed man’s head, while at the same time, he stumbled.

“Clang!” “Chi!”

Two rays of sword light, one which blocked the six-shuttle longstaff, while the other sword light slashed straight through the black-clothed man’s face, stabbing out from the back of his skull, carrying

some brain matter and blood!

Bang!

The power of the six-shuttle longstaff stick forced Ning to retreat backwards by multiple steps, and naturally the sword was drawn out as well. There was a hole directly in the forehead of the black-clothed man, but there was no way it could possibly be healed. Forget about him; if Ning's skull had been pierced through, even he would have died without question.

"You…you…." Fiendgod Body Refiners possessed astonishing life force, allowing the black-clothed man to have a final few moments of life. He stared at Ning, struggling to open his mouth. "You…"

And then he fell down, causing the ground to tremble.

"Huff…huff…huff…" Ning stood there, his breathing rather ragged. He stared at the corpse in front of him, knowing how unwilling this person had been to accept death like this, how mystified this person had been in death. Most likely, this black-clothed 'senior apprentice', in the moment of his death, was still trying to puzzle out why his head had suddenly suffered an attack. Who had attacked him from behind?

Divine will. This was Ning's killing technique.

Once it was used, if he was unable to kill his enemies with it, his enemies would immediately use Escape Seals and instantly run away. Most likely, by then, even the Zifu Disciple would know that Ning possessed a 'divine will' ability. Thus, it was not to be used lightly, and when used, it had to kill the enemy.

Previously, Ning had been fighting with him head on, but because of the poison, Ning could no longer afford to waste time. Thus, he used his divine will to control the stone.

The two had been on par in terms of general power. In a life and death battle, one couldn't be the slightest bit careless. When that

stone had carried boundless force in smashing down on the black-clothed man's head, his staff techniques had become completely chaotic. Naturally, he was even less able to fend off Ning's divine, ghost-like swordplay, with the result being a sword stabbing straight through his fatal point between his forehead.

"Hahaha…" Ning began to laugh, raising his head and shouting heroically, "Come! Each one of you who comes shall die! However many comes, however many I shall kill! Hahaha…"

At this moment, Ning was incomparably crazed.

He was in utterly dire straits, and his clansmen had been trapped here. His chance of survival was very slim. Ning naturally became all the more frenzied. Killing an expert of the enemy naturally made him feel incomparably satisfied.

There were deep gouges everywhere on the ground, with shattered rocks littering everywhere. After all, prior to this, Ning's swordplay had activated the power of the world itself, while the enemy was also incomparably strong. Naturally, the area around them had been reduced to rubble.

"Poison?" Ning could already sense that the corpse essence in his body was being slowly ground away by the natural life force in his body that was being created by the Crimsonbright divine power. "It seems it still can't do anything against my Fiendgod body."

Ning was different from that black-clothed 'senior apprentice'.

The black-clothed man couldn't withstand the poison…but Ning trained in the number one Fiendgod Body Refining technique, while the Crimsonbright divine power was born from a fusion of the power of the sun and the power of the moon, while his divine body had been formed and birthed by Solar Truefire and Lunar Truewater. In terms of quality, his body was untold times more powerful than other Fiendgod Body Refiner bodies.

“That black-clothed man’s power was clearly much greater than the previous man’s. Most likely, he has a fairly high status in this place. Perhaps he has some secrets on this formation on him.” Ning hurriedly began to search the black-clothed man’s corpse, but unfortunately…

The Zifu Disciple himself actually wasn’t an expert in formations. All he had done was set up formation flags in a very formulaic way. Ning thus naturally wasn’t able to find any information regarding this formation on the corpse.

“However, he has quite a few Dao-seals and bottles and elixirs on him.” Ning collected them all, but didn’t have any time to investigate these battles. First of all, he didn’t dare to pull out the stoppers for fear of them being poisoned, and second of all, he himself didn’t know anything about poisons. It was best for him to spend his time focusing on the formation and increasing his abilities in formations. Breaking this formation as soon as possible was what mattered.

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Within the mountain.

The six beautifully dressed men and women were currently, as per the senior apprentice’s orders, torturing these Xiantian lifeforms.

“Haha, with our senior apprentice personally handling this, your young master Ji Ning’s death is assured.”

“In the formation, I heard senior apprentice say that young master Ji Ning is still a youth? Little Seven, you are nearly thirty years old this year. Can it be that this young master Ji Ning is even younger than you?” The six men and women chatted amongst themselves.

One of the nearby men bound to the pillar, a bald man whose body was covered with scars, howled at them, “Young master Ji Ning of the Ji clan is perhaps just eleven or twelve years old this year. Compared to him, you are like worms on the ground while he is like a divine

dragon in the skies!”

“Shut your mouth.” The nearby servants immediately used heated irons to torture and burn him.

“Six fools! You want to compare yourselves to young master Ji Ning!”

“I can’t even begin to express how inferior you are.”

“Hahaha, almost thirty years old, but he wants to compare himself to young master Ji Ning? I’m laughing so hard my stomach hurts!”

Those nearly hundred Xiantian lifeforms of the Swallow Mountain area all began to shout out and mock them.

“Beat them, beat them!” The six men and women shouted angrily.

Suddenly…

“Come! Each one of you who comes shall die! However many comes, however many I shall kill! Hahaha…” That wild, frenzied voice was filled with both hysteria and utter, incomparable madness.

“What?!” The faces of those six changed.

They were certain that this wasn’t the voice of the senior apprentice. Then…it could be only the voice of that trapped young master Ji Ning.

“Can it be that our senior apprentice-brother died?” They were all in a state of panic. Without question, the senior apprentice was by far the most powerful of their group. Even if he didn’t use the many insidious options available to him, he was still incomparably strong.

“Senior apprentice-brother!”

“Senior apprentice-brother!”

The six men and women shouted outwards, but their senior apprentice-brother didn’t respond.

“If you want to find your senior apprentice-brother, then go to the Netherworld Kingdom!” That wild, impudent voice rang out from afar.

“Senior apprentice-brother died.” The six men and women looked at each other, their eyes filled with awe.

“Killed by a youth of just eleven or twelve years of age.”

“Only eleven or twelve, yet he was able to kill our senior apprentice-brother? Is…is there such a monstrous talent in the world? Even in our school, there has never been such a monster. Most likely, only those legendary top-tier tribes under the protection of Immortals will there be monsters like this.” The six were completely overawed. After all, they quite broad experience.

Their own school was a major school.

But they had never seen anyone eleven or twelve years old who was so possible.

“Kakaka…” The iron board in the center of the mountain began to slowly swing open, revealing that dark, gloomy tunnel. The tunnel had a hint of green light emanating from within it, and its cold, sinister aura caused the six men and women to shiver.

“My boy Gan!” That shrill voice was quavering. “That ‘Ji Ning’ killed my boy Gan. He will die, definitely die!!!”

The six men and women felt their hearts shake. As for those servants, all of them were shuddering. None of them could predict what this person would do when enraged.

“That ‘Ji Ning’ is only eleven or twelve years old? What a monster. If it weren’t for the fact that he is an enemy, I would recommend him for entry into our school. But he killed my boy Gan! He must die!” The shrill voice was filled with hate. “Little Seven, come in.”

“Come in?” The handsome youth was startled.

He had never before entered the cavern in the mountain. That was a forbidden area.

“Quick, enter.” The shrill voice carried anger within it.

“Yes.” The handsome youth didn’t dare to hesitate any longer. Clearing his throat, he hurriedly walked towards the black tunnel, then leapt into the cavern.

Chapter 19 – Hearteater

The dark tunnel was deep and also almost as straight as a pen. It was nearly three hundred meters deep, and the handsome youth, when jumping down, released his Xiantian Ki, allowing himself to descend as lightly as a goose feather, while at the same time, every so often, he would grab onto the sides of the dark tunnel to slow his descent. After a while, he finally stepped on the ground.

“This is so deep. Uh, where is Master’s secret room?” The handsome youth hurriedly looked everywhere while carefully advancing through the winding tunnels. Up ahead, there was a dazzling green light. Soon, he reached an open stone door, behind which was an area filled with green life, as well as ripples which made the heart tremble.

“Master.” The handsome youth called out from outside the stone door.

“Enter.” The shrill voice screeched.

“Yes.” The handsome youth suppressed his terror and walked in. This was a sealed stone room that was ten meters in diameter. In the center of the stone room, there was an enormous boulder, upon which was a man who wore loose black robes, had a skinny, pale face, and long, flowing black hair. The man’s eyes emitted an otherworldly green light, and his entire body seemed to be made out of solidified evil.

In front of this person was an enormous cauldron, and above the cauldron, there was a burning green flame that emitted a freezing aura. Beneath the green flame, there lay hovering an unadorned, blood-red cloth banner, which had a number of either hidden or visible ferocious faces on it. The faces were either screaming soundlessly or bellowing as they tried to swallow each other and battled each other.

The entire cloth banner was surrounded by a layer of black light that was visible to the naked eye.

“Sin!” The handsome youth’s heart was trembling. “A grave sin.”

Those who did good accumulated karmic merit. Those who did evil accumulated sins.

Those who had committed grave sins would naturally emanate a heart-shaking evil aura. But the aura of sin around the cloth banner was actually so strong, it was visible to the naked eye. This was simply astonishing.

“This is a magic treasure which was born from endless amounts of sin.” The handsome youth was both terrified as well as desirous. He knew very well that when one created this sort of magic treasure that was refined from sins, when one underwent the Three Calamities or Nine Tribulations, the power of the trials would be incomparably powerful. But this sort of magic treasure itself was incomparably, astonishingly powerful as well. This was why some evil schools were clearly committing countless grave sins, and yet were still able to continue forward in training to become an Immortal.

It was because these evil paths allowed one to advance more quickly, and to even battle against foes of higher levels.

“No wonder Master said that once his magic treasure is completed, he wouldn’t even fear a Wanxiang Adept.” The handsome youth couldn’t breathe.

“Little Seven.” The long-haired man, seated in the lotus position, spoke in a shrill voice. “My boy Gan was my first disciple. He was like a son to me! This Ji Ning killed my son. How could I, Bei Goodson, possibly forgive him?”

The handsome youth lowered his head.

“I need to refine this magic treasure. I can’t spare any attention.” Bei

Goodson's green eyes stared at the handsome youth. Creating this sort of deeply sinful magic treasure was incomparably dangerous to begin with, and there were constant repercussions from the creation process. There were some people who were themselves bitten to death and had their souls dispersed by the dread wraiths they had created. Of course, if one truly wanted to force a pause, one could, but the price would also be great.

"Little Seven, I bequeath unto you one Hearteater Powder." A bottle appeared out of nowhere in the palm of Goodson's right hand, and he casually tossed it towards the handsome youth.

The handsome youth accepted it, then stared at the bottle in terror. "Hearteater Powder?"

He had heard of the famous Hearteater Powder before.

The price of this one bottle of Hearteater Powder was more valuable than even a ranked magic treasure. Countless Zifu Disciples had died to Hearteater Powder, and it was incredibly hard to procure. Even his own master had only been able to acquire this terrifying poison because he had been born into their school and had connections.

"If it wasn't for the fact that I can't be distracted, how would I possibly be willing to waste this Hearteater Powder?" Goodson said shrilly. "Remember. Smash the bottle within thirty meters of that Ji Ning, and he will definitely be poisoned. Once the Hearteater Powder enters his body, although it takes effect slowly and will need three days, it is virtually impossible to get rid of it once one has been poisoned. He, a mere Xiantian Fiendgod Body Refiner, will die without question, even if what he is training in is the legendary number one Fiendgod Body Refining, the [Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens]!"

The handsome youth nodded

"Remember. You yourself need to be careful. Stay far away. If you are

poisoned, come to me. I will give you the antidote.” Goodson said.

“Your disciple is still competent to perform a minor task like releasing poison.” The handsome youth said.

“Go.” Goodson’s gaze fell upon that blood-red cloth banner beneath the swirling green flames. The countless dread wraiths within the cloth banner occasionally appeared, extending their necks out towards Goodson and wildly trying to bite at him, but Goodson’s oily green eyes remained cold and deadly.

The handsome youth bowed respectfully, then left. When leaving this deep, dark tunnel, he jumped at high speed, occasionally clamping onto protruding pieces of rock on the stone walls. Soon afterwards, he left the tunnel.

Kakaka…

The iron boards turned, and the tunnel was shut once more.

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Within the black mist.

The Waterflame Lotus surrounded him, and Ning’s soul was currently pondering at high speed, with one hypothetical formation after another appearing within his mind, and the construction of the formation changing nonstop. As Ning frantically analyzed these formations, his level of understanding with regards to formations continued to rise.

“Huh?” Ning suddenly felt a spike of fear.

When a person’s soul was as powerful as his, one would be able to unconsciously sense terrifying dangers approaching. The last time his soul had this feeling was when he was attempting the third trial in the ancient Aquatic Manor. This time, however, the feeling was even stronger than last time, as though no matter how he struggled, he still wouldn’t be able to escape this danger.

“Danger?” Ning opened his eyes to stare around himself.

Suddenly…

The black fog in front of him to the right naturally parted, and in that instant, a large amount of white threads instantly wrapped towards him. In the distance, that handsome youth could be seen wielding a horsetail whisk in one hand and a Dao-seal in the other. The white threads of the horsetail whisk instantly attacked Ning.

“Hmph.” Twin swords appeared in Ning’s hands, and the Waterflame Lotus blocked those white threads.

“Boom!”

In that instant when those thousands of white strands and the Waterflame Lotus collided, it was as though something exploded. Only now did Ning realize that the thousands of white strands of had contained a bottle within it. In the instant their attacks had collided, the bottle had been smashed apart. Seeing the battle smash open, his soul could feeling that incomparably terrifying danger sense intensify, causing Ning’s face to change.

“There had to have been something in the bottle.” Ning was no fool, but he couldn’t see anything. It was odorless and invisible!

The distant, handsome youth had immediately retracted his horsetail whisk in that instant the bottle had smashed open, and had also used his Escape Seal, immediately fleeing and disappearing.

“This…this bottle.” Ning had an uneasy feeling.

“Ah!”

Suddenly, a stabbing pain appeared in his heart. Ning’s face turned ashen, and he held his chest. The Crimsonbright divine power in his body immediately began to search throughout his entire body, but no matter what, it still couldn’t find any hint of poison. However, his heart continued to feel that slow, stabbing pain, and his entire body

began to slowly ache. There was no way to stop it at all. Even his head was starting to hurt.

“What should I do? The poison has invaded my entire body, but my Crimsonbright divine power isn’t able to sense it, nor can my divine will.” Ning, at this moment, suddenly remembered the words of that old black bull in the underwater estate. He had been warned not to underestimate any opponent, especially those who trained to become Immortals.

Immortal practitioners had varied techniques. One could simply use poison to kill you. No matter how powerful your ability to fight was, they could simply refuse to fight you.

This was how Immortal practitioners were!

Nobody knew what anyone else was truly capable of….

“Hahaha.” From afar, a delighted sound could be heard. “Ji Ning, no matter how monstrous of a genius you are, you will definitely die.”

Within that great formation, Ning’s face was unsightly. Although neither his divine will nor his Crimsonbright divine power could sense the poisonous elements, he could feel the pain wracking his entire body. This invisible poison was slowly, constantly devouring his entire body. Although the devouring process was slow, it was inexorable in its progress. Even his incomparably powerful Fiendgod lifeforce in his body was unable to remove it.

“What a fierce poison. Odorless, colorless, and undetectable.” Ning was surprised. “Although it isn’t like some other poisons which instantly take effect, it seems to have embedded itself deep in every single cell. There’s no way to remove it at all. If this continues, in most likely just two or three days, my body will be finished.”

“Two or three days?”

Ning’s eyes began wild.

“In the last two or three days, even if I die, I will destroy this formation.” Ning’s heart was beginning to blaze with a heaven-reaching fury. “I will wipe them all out, or if I’m lucky, maybe even find the antidote on their bodies.”

“There’s nowhere to run.”

“I must destroy this formation!”

Ning sat down in the lotus position and closed his eyes. The protective lotus flower swivelled around him as he once more frantically endeavoured to analyze formations.

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Within the mountain.

That handsome youth walked back, then glanced at Blindfish, Ji Jadewich, and the other members of the Ji clan, who had looks of shock and fury on their faces. The other members of the Ji clan of the East Prefecture, North Prefecture, South Prefecture, and Central Prefecture all looked at him angrily as well.

“What are you looking at? Your young master Ji Ning was poisoned. In three days, he will definitely die.” The handsome youth was completely confident. “Forget about him. Even a Zifu Disciple who is poisoned by this poison will definitely die.”

“Our Ji clan’s Patriarch will definitely come.”

“He will definitely exterminate all of you, and he will also rescue young master Ji Ning.”

Blindfish and the others weren’t willing to believe that Ji Ning would die.

“Hahaha, your clan’s Patriarch?” The handsome youth laughed wildly. “How could a small tribe here in your Swallow Mountain possibly have poison of this level? Even in our school, this sort of poison is

hard to obtain. Stop looking at me. I won't tell you what poison it is."

"Go die."

"You will all definitely die."

The members of the Ji clan all cursed at him, and even the other bound Xiantian lifeforms began to curse in their despair.

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Within West Prefecture City of the Ji clan.

Ji Yichuan was currently accompanying his wife, Yuchi Snow. Occasionally, he would look outside towards the door.

Suddenly, through the door, he could see that from afar, an Azure Firebird appeared in the skies, with two people on its back. One was the red-clothed Ji Redflower, while the other was a red-haired, gray-robed elder. At a single glance, Ji Yichuan recognized him...that was the true pillar for the entire Ji clan.

The Ji clan's clan leader, Ji Ninefire!

"Snow, Snow, the clan leader is here." Yichuan hurriedly shouted.

Chapter 20 – Wait For Your Child

The Azure Firebird landed in the courtyard, and the red-haired, gray-robed Ji Ninefire stepped own, arriving outside the room's door in just two steps.

"Yichuan." Ninefire had a smile that would make a person feel peaceful. According to legend, when Ninefire was young, he had an incomparably explosive temperament, but because Ninefire had lived nearly four centuries by now, while the oldest member of the Ji clan of the Western Prefecture was only a century or so in age, the stories of what Ninefire had been like when young were lost to legends.

"Clan leader." Ji Yichuan, upon seeing the clan leader, immediately revealed a look of urgency in his eyes. "Snow, she…"

"I heard from Redflower." Ninefire nodded. "Let me take a look."

"Right." Yichuan immediately led the way forward. At this moment, Snow had already left her bed, curtseying respectfully. "Snow greets the clan leader."

Ninefire said, "Your body is very weak right now. First lie down. There's no need to stand on empty ceremonies."

Only then did Snow half lie down on the bed, while Ninefire sat on the chair by the side of the bed. He stretched his hand out, placing it against Snow's wrist, gently tapping with his finger…immediately, a spot of red, fiery light immediately enveloped Snow's entire body. In this instant, it seemed as though Snow's entire body was covered by a layer of flames.

Yichuan watched nervously by the side, while Ninefire's eyes were closed.

As much time as was needed for a pot of tea to be brewed passed before the fiery light surrounding Snow's body vanished. Only now

did Ninefire open his eyes as well. Facing Yichuan, whose face was filled with anticipation, Ninefire couldn't help but let a soft sigh, then gently shake his head. "The seeds of the illness have taken deep root. There's no way for it to be reversed."

"Ah!" Yichuan's face instantly turned white.

Ninefire sighed. "That year, your wife was a peak Xiantian expert. During that disaster, it was one thing for her foundation to have been damaged; if she had been immediately treated, it would have been fine. But your wife then executed that secret art which took her own life energy...it was like another blow to her already heavily injured body, causing the illness to be even more deeply rooted! Unless you can find some sort of pill suitable for mortals to use to extend their lives...there is no other method."

"Longevity-enhancing pill for mortals?" Yichuan looked his wife, and Snow looked back at him. Their gazes intersected, and Snow sighed gently. "Yichuan, I understand my illness."

If it was just a matter of consuming a longevity-enhancing pill, although such a pill would be incomparably expensive, if Yichuan bankrupted himself, sold off all his possessions as well as the thousands of unranked magic treasures Ji Ning had given him, and also borrowed some money from the Ji clan, he might be able to acquire one such pill. But the additional requirement of 'suitable for mortals to use'...the price would instantly rise by several additional levels.

The more powerful a medicinal pill, the more powerful the medicinal effect. A pill that was capable of extending a person's lifespan was a pill that defied the natural course of heaven. A pill that not only did this but also did it in such a way which allowed the weak, fragile bodies of a mortal to be able to endure the process...the preciousness of such a pill was far beyond what the likes of the Ji clan could possibly imagine.

"Yichuan." Ninefire said slowly, "I've refined some pills. I will

immediately arrange for them to be sent over. Your wife should have another three months of life."

"Three months!" Yichuan's face completely changed.

Snow just revealed a smile. She said, "Yichuan." Yichuan hurriedly turned to look at his wife, who laughed and said, "Three months is better than I had anticipated. I regret nothing. I did what I did that year in order to give birth to Ning. If I hadn't given birth to Ning, I might have been able to live an extra twenty years, but every single day of those twenty years, I would have been in a hell of regret. But now, every day of these ten years that I have lived, I have lived happily. It's enough, it's enough. Have Ning come back. I want to see him. As long as he is by my side, all is well!"

"Alright." Yichuan hurriedly nodded, then after pondering for a moment, shouted, "Brother Black, Azure Firebird."

Immediately, from outside, a black-clothed man and an azure-clothed woman stepped in. It was the human forms of the black serpent and the Azure Firebird.

"Brother Black." Yichuan said hurriedly. "Ji Ning will easily be able to recognize your voice. Thus, ride atop the Azure Firebird and quickly head to the border region between our Ji clan and the Ironwood clan." As he spoke, a map appeared in Yichuan's hands. He just casually glanced towards the door, making sure of their directions, then carefully sensed the location of the jade sword which Ning was holding.

Staring at the map, Yichuan quickly ascertained a location. With a gentle tap of the finger, he pointed to a mountain on the map, and a spot of blood stained the map there. "Ji Ning is currently at this location. He hasn't moved this entire time. Based on my sense, although there are slight uncertainties regarding the distance between us, he's definitely within a hundred kilometers of this mountain. As long as you ride the Azure Firebird to the air above the mountain, then call for him and say that his mother is critically ill

and that he is to quickly return, he will definitely hear it."

"Understood." The black-clothed man said hurriedly. "Yichuan, don't worry. Ning's hearing ability is far beyond that of ordinary people's. He should be able to hear my voice from as far as two or three hundred kilometers away."

It wasn't possible for mortals to project their voices a hundred kilometers, but it was simple for a Xiantian lifeform. For example, when Ning had been at Serpentwing Lake and shouted at Serpentwing, his voice had also projected throughout the lake.

"Azure Firebird, I'll have to trouble you to make a trip." Yichuan looked at the azure-garbed woman.

"A small matter." The Azure Firebird's voice was very gentle. "We can't delay for even a moment. I'll immediately head out along with Elder Brother Black."

"Let's go." The black-clothed man also nodded right away.

Taking the map with them, the black-garbed man quickly mounted onto the back of the Azure Firebird, then quickly flew towards the direction of the borders between the Ji clan and the Ironwood clan.

"Ning, son." Snow watched as the Azure Firebird flew high into the sky, and in her heart she began to miss her son. The closer she drew to death, the more she wanted to see her son, her dearly beloved son.

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The Azure Firebird's speed was astonishingly fast. In less than two hours, she had already arrived in the air above that mountain.

"This is the mountain." The black serpent nodded. From high up in the air, it was very easy to recognize the landscape below.

"Elder Brother Black, call for him right away." The Azure Firebird

urged.

“Right.” The black serpent stared below, then immediately infused his voice with monstrous energy, shouting loudly, “Young master Ji Ning, your mother is critically ill. Quickly return!”

“Young master Ji Ning, your mother is critically ill. Quickly return!” This voice echoed down from the heavens, quickly covering an area of two hundred kilometers of the forests and mountain below. And directly beneath them, deep within that mountain…there were a million commoners, whom the two spirit-beasts didn’t notice at all.

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Within the mountain.

Those Xiantian lifeforms that were bound to the pillars were still undergoing countless amounts of torment. They had to endure torture, and yet they were still kept alive. This was because the longer they were tortured, the greater the rage and hatred these Xiantian lifeforms would feel! The more powerful, the deeper their hatred, the fiercer the dread wraiths their souls would transform into.

“Young master Ji Ning, your mother is critically ill. Quickly return!” The voice drifted down from far above.

Although a great formation was hidden here, causing the curses and cries of the million commoners within to be trapped and unable to leave, the sounds from the outside world could still come in…it was much as how the Zifu Disciple, ‘Bei Zishan’, was deep within the secret in the mountain and could hear the sounds from the outside world, even though the sounds from within the secret room wouldn’t go out.

That way, they could more easily detect what was going on in the outside world.

“Young master Ji Ning, your mother is critically ill. Quickly return!”

The voice echoed throughout the mountains, the voice shockingly loud.

“What a loud voice.”

“Who is shouting up there?”

The six beautifully dressed men and women all looked upwards towards the sky, with one of them, a scraggly, bearded man, hurriedly saying, “Fellow apprentices, do you hear that? They are calling for that Ji Ning.”

“Ji Ning’s mother is critically ill?” The women with the scorpion said in surprise. “His mother’s ill?”

“Hahaha…” The most muscular man of the group, a man with cyan hair, began to laugh loudly. “That Ji Ning is a monstrously talented figure. If he is allowed to develop, who knows how terrifying he will be in the future? But he won’t be able to live for more than three days, and is trapped within the formation. His mother is clearly critically ill, but even if he shouts until he is hoarse, his voice won’t escape!”

“Right.” The handsome youth sighed. “Most likely, he is in a state of extreme rage right now.”

“I must say, this Ji Ning really is a formidable figure. At eleven or twelve years of age, he was able to kill our senior martial-apprentice. But his final doom is so pitiful. He will pass away in the midst of despair, rage, pain, and regret. Hahaha…this is the end of this genius!”

These fellow apprentices chatted amongst themselves. They could imagine how Ji Ning currently felt, which made them feel all the more delighted.

“Madame is critically ill?”

“Yuchi Snow is critically ill?”

The Ji clan of the West Prefecture's Blindfish, Ji Jadewich, Poortile, and other members were all incomparably astonished, enraged, and filled with hate. At the same time, they felt a hint of pity for Ji Ning. After all, he had less than three days to live, and his mother was critically ill, yet he had no way to return…this sort of pain must be heart-breaking.

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Right. Everything was exactly as how those fellow apprentices deep in the mountain imagined. It was also exactly as Blindfish and the others feared. Ning was currently feeling utterly agony and grief in his heart.

"Mother!"

"Mother!" Ning's tears began to fall down uncontrollably. He was in such pain, his entire body trembled. His heart felt as though it was being cut by a knife. That woman who had loved him since he was a child, that woman who had treated him as her world…that woman who always, uncontrollably doted on him. She was actually critically ill? Critically ill?

"Aaaaaah!" Ning suddenly threw his head upwards, letting out a howl of incomparable pain. This howl spread throughout the mountain, but no matter what, it couldn't spread out from it.

As for those six men and women within the mountain residence, when they heard the howl, their hearts couldn't help but tremble. That could sense the boundless grief and pain contained within that howl.

"Young master."

"Young master Ji Ning." Blindfish wept. That precocious, brilliant four year old toddler who he had personally taught archery…how had he ended up like this? This was even more agonizing and terrifying that the torture his body had endured.

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“I’m going to leave, I’m going to leave, I’m going to leave.” Ning’s voice was quavering. “Break the formation! I’m going to break the formation!”

Ning forced his eyes shut.

An incomparably powerful surge of emotion swept his entire body, filling his entire spirit. He was going to break the formation!!! He had to leave it, he had to go see that woman who treated him as more important than her life. He had to see her!!! Otherwise, even if he died and went to the Netherworld Kingdom, he would feel incomparable guilt and regret!

“Break the formation. I’m going to break the formation.” Ning’s closed eyes were trembling, and his soul, filled with this incomparably powerful emotion that was even greater than what was felt at the moment between life and death, reached a new limit as he frantically visualized methods for the breaking of this formation.

Blood began to leak out from Ning’s nose, and blood was coming from his ears as well.

Clearly, this surge of powerful emotion had injured his body.

“That’s it!” Ning’s soul, which had been constantly testing out new formations, suddenly halted. An incomparably complicated formation model suddenly appeared in his mind, which contained every possible variable within it.

Ning opened his eyes.

“Mother!” Ning raised his head, letting out a frenzied howl. “I will go back to see you, I will definitely go back to see you! Wait for your child!”

Immediately, he transformed into a blur, moving through the formation. Ning moved like a ghost, quickly reaching a place which

was still covered with thick black mist, but which had a black formation flag inserted into the earth. The runes atop the formation flag were currently fashing. Ning reached out, directly grabbing the flag and giving it a powerful pull.

Instantly, the black mist that had been covering the entire world vanished, revealing a clearly visible mountain scene. From afar, many servants were staring in astonishment towards him.

“What.” The six men and women rushed out of the mountain, staring in his direction with astonishment. “The formation was destroyed!”

Ning was holding the formation flag in his hand, the light of utter madness in his eyes.

“Kill! Kill him! Kill him at all costs! He cannot be permitted to leave this place alive!” Suddenly, a shrill voice filled with incomparable rage emanated from underground.

Glossary

PEOPLE:

Gods:

Pangu : The creator deity who made the universe, the Fiendgod of Primordial Chaos.
Nuwa : The creator of humans, currently supposedly the most powerful god in existence and the only one to reach Pangu's level.
Cui Jue : The Lord of Cui Palace, the First Judge of the Dead. Also from Earth.
Grandma Meng : Dispenses her special 'elixir' in the land of the dead, which causes the dead to forget their memories before being reincarnated.

Ji Clan :

Ji Ning : The main character of this novel.
Ji Yichuan : The father of Ning, nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Number one expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.
Yuchi Snow : The mother of Ning. Member of the Yuchi clan.
Ji Ninefire : The Patriarch of all five prefectures of the Ji clan.
Ji Young : The Prefecture Lord of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.
Ji Lee : Nicknamed the 'Fire God', the number two expert of the Ji clan of the West Prefecture. Leads a faction opposed to Prefecture Lord Young.
Ji Jadewich : The son of Ji Lee.
Ji Grizzly : The adoptive son of Ji Lee, had been taken in as an infant by a grizzly bear monster.
Ji Redflower : Friend of Ji Yichuan, rides an Azure Firebird.

Spring Grass : Also known as 'Miwa'. One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.
Blacktooth : The father of Spring Grass, and the chief of Blacktooth

Tribe.
Autumn Leaf : One of the two maidservants of Ning who took care of him as he grew up.
Blindfish : The number one archery expert, serves the Ji clan.
Mowu: An experienced Ninefang Warrior, loyal to Ji Yichuan. Follows Ning on his first adventure along with Autumn Leaf.

Ironwood Clan

Ironwood Zhan: A late Ki Refiner Xiantian expert of the Ironwood clan. Has a Bi'an Tiger as his spirit beast. Wielded the **Blackwood Vinewhip** as his weapon.

Miscellaneous

Juhua Immortal : A powerful Loose Immortal who lived for millions of years. Controlled an Immortal estate which he was the third master of.
Rampart : The disciple of the Juhua Immortal. Died somewhere.

CREATURES:

Godbeasts :

Armored Wurm : A dragon type Godbeast that seems to be like an Ankylosaurus.
Whitewater Hound : A large, snow-white hound-type creature. Ji Yichuan has one, who once saved Ning and Snow.
Emerald Skyserpent: A serpent-type Godbeast, one of the more powerful creatures in Eastmount Marsh. Fought against Ning several times when Ning was at the peak Houtian stage. Capable of 'Void Blink' upon reaching the 'one with the world' level.
Howling Moonwolf :
Earthquake Rhino :
Redclawed Goldenraven :
Thundersea Owl :

Landwyrm :

Other Monsters :

Serpentwing : A named late Xiantian level winged serpent, lives in Serpentwing Lake.
Azure Firebird : A flying fire-type bird-type monster. One is in service to the Ji clan of the West Prefecture.

ITEMS:

Dao Battle-Armor: A type of armor that allows multiple users to join their strength together.
Dao-seal : A magic scroll imbued with certain powers, such as the 'Divine Movement Seal', 'Light Body Seal', and more.
Kalestone : A naturally occurring gemstone which is like a 'bag of holding', able to store a certain amount of materials in an extradimensional space.
Goldstar Shirt : A naturally occurring treasure which protects against all attacks below the Xiantian level.
Darknorth swords : A set of three swords, extremely sharp. Originally a damaged 'magic treasure' of the 'flying sword' variety that was ranked. Purchased by Ning.
Blackwood Vinewhip : A magic treasure previously held by Ironwood Zhan.
Traceless Talisman : A single-use talisman that can allow a person to travel ten thousand kilometers in an instant.

TECHNIQUES:

Sword Techniques:

Possessed by the Ji Clan :

[**Raindrop Sutra**]: The most defensive of the Ji clan. The technique

which Ji Yichuan became famous for using, thus being nicknamed the 'Raindrop Sword'. Includes the attacks: *'Drizzling Rain', 'Rain Line', 'Raindrop Pierces Rocks', 'Thin Streams Flow Forever', 'Tempest Curtain', 'Watertight', 'Eternally Fresh Waterflow', 'Merciless Waterflow'* .
[**Thunderflame Sword**]: The most offensive technique of the Ji clan. Only three stances were found in the burnt manual, but despite that, is incredibly powerful. No defensive stances. Includes the attacks: *Thunderflash Flint, Blazing Thunderclap, Moth Flies Into the Flame* .
[**Polaris Secret Manual**]: A very balanced, orthodox technique, part of the [Polaris Sword Manual].
[**Illusion Sutra**]: An insidious technique that could be applied to any weapon. Allowed one to hide their true powers and actions.
[**Melody of 10000 Swords**]: The first 'elite' swordplay the Ji clan obtained, which they themselves developed. The most complicated, yet also the simplest when mastered.

Formation Techniques

Yin Yang Twin Energy Formation : A formation which Ironwood Zhan of the Ironwood clan had, set up by using eight formation flags. Very powerful at the Xiantian level.
Lesser Thousand Sword Formation : A formation of an enemy of the Juhua Immortal, uses up to hundreds of sword-type magic treasures.

Fiendgod Body Refining Techniques :

Possessed by the Ji Clan :

[**Crimsonbright Diagram of the Nine Heavens**]: The technique Ning chooses. The unquestioned best Fiendgod Body Refining, but also the hardest to learn. One has to be able to sense the Great Yang (Sun) and the Great Ying (Moon), then absorb their energies. If one is extremely suited, the first time training it, small balls of energy will appear in the trainer's hands, with the left having the 'Moon' with a picture of an 'Osmanthus Tree', while the right would have the 'Sun' with a picture of the 'Golden Crow'.

[Calamity Fiend] , [Indestructible Blood Fiend], [Song of the Inferno], [Vajra Buddhist Sutras], [Freeform Soul] , [Eternal Mysteries of the Yellow Earth] , [Spirit Fox Sutra] , [Sutra of the Future Buddha]

Footwork Techniques:

Shadewind Steps : A unique set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Taught to Ning.
Windwing Evasion : Another set of footwork techniques which only Ning's mother, Yuchi Snow, knows. Can only be trained at the Xiantian level.

Divine Abilities:

Kuafu Sunchaser :
72 Transformations :
Three Heads, Six Arms :
Houyi Shooting the Sun :
Heavenly Transformation: Windwing Evasion (see above)

Other Techniques:

Nuwa Painting visualization technique : A soul-strengthening visualization technique taught by Lord Cui. Supposedly an elite skill even in the Deva realm, much less the mortal realms.
Inner Visualization of the Shining Sun-Moon Buddha : The visualization technique used by the Juhua Immortal.
Waterflame Lotus : A technique which Ning develops during a night of meditation by a pool through a hint of the Dao which he came to understand.

LOCATIONS:

Grand Xia Dynasty : The empire which rules over the entire world. Trillions of years old.
Stillwater Commandery: The Commandery region in which Swallow

Mountain is located. Controlled by the Marquisate of Stillwater.
Dark North Sea : The unending ocean in the north of the world. Where Yichuan and Snow met and conceived Ning.
Swallow Mountain : A massive area, where Ji clan of the West Prefecture is one of the local hegemons.
Serpentwing Lake : A large lake a hundred kilometers long in the Swallow Mountain Area. Lair to the Xiantian monster, Serpentwing.
Eastmount Marsh : A large marsh with a lake in the middle of it. Home to many Xiantian level Diremonsters.

TERMS AND PHRASES:

Power Levels :

Houtian : Lifespan of a hundred years.
Xiantian : Lifespan of two hundred years. 'Diremonster' is a term used to refer to monsters who have reached this level.
Zifu : The 'Violet Palace'. At this level, one will be addressed as Zifu Disciple. Lifespan of five hundred years. Generally capable of 'dividing the mind'
Wanxiang : 'Myriad Manifestations'. At this level, one will be addressed as Wanxiang Adept. Lifespan of eight hundred years. Generally capable of 'divine will', which allows them to control objects with their mind.
Primordial : Can be referred to as Primordial Daoist. Generally capable of 'divine sense', an extrasensory ability.
Void : Can be referred to as 'Land Immortal', or 'Earthly Immortal'. In the later levels of the Void stage, a heavenly tribulation will test them. If they fail, then they will die and their spirits will be extinguished. If a Primordial's body is destroyed but manages to escape with his soul, then he will become a 'Loose Immortal', whose power is roughly on par with the 'Earth Immortals'.
Celestial Immortal : Only at this stage can one be considered to have ascended beyond the Three Realms and no longer be formed by the Five Elements!

Insight Levels:

Basic => Advanced => 'One With the World' => 'True Meaning of the Dao'=> 'Dao Realm' => 'Dao Path'

The Greater Universe :

Three Realms : The 'Heaven' Realm, the 'Mortal Realm', and the 'Netherworld Kingdom Realm'
Six Realms of Reincarnation : Deva, Asura (these two are Heaven realm), Human, Animal (these two are 'Mortal' realm), Preta Ghost, Hell (these two are 'Netherworld Kingdom' realm)
Book of Life and Death : The book on which every person's fate is written, their birth, their life, and their death. A person can change their fate by their actions, however. Controlled by Lord Cui.

Miscellaneous Terms and Phrases:

Beasthead : Used to refer to an amount of gold that weighed ten pounds in the world where Ning was born into for his second life.
Fiendgod : Powerful creatures that were born from nature itself and possess unbelievable might. The creator of the universe, Pangu, was himself a Fiendgod.
Godbeasts : Monstrous beasts that have the lineage of the Fiendgods in them. Far more powerful than normal beasts.
Fiendgod Body Refining Technique : Techniques meant to build up the body and make it as powerful as a Fiendgod's. Far more powerful than Ki Refining of the same level. Cannot utilize magic treasures unless also training in Ki Refining.
Ki Refining technique : Techniques meant to build up internal ki energy, which allows one to use magic treasures at the Xiantian level.
Ninefang Warriors : A term for peak Houtian level warriors in the Swallow Mountain region.

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